

# ROMANCE OF EMPIRE SOUTH AFRICA



BY IAN D. COLVIN



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Romance of Empire Series

EDITED BY JOHN LANG

SOUTH AFRICA







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ROMANCE OF EMPIRE

# SOUTH AFRICA

BY

IAN D. COLVIN

AUTHOR OF 'THE PARLIAMENT OF BEASTS'

WITH TWELVE REPRODUCTIONS IN COLOUR OF ORIGINAL DRAWINGS BY

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TO  
S. R. C.



## PREFACE

IF it were not that I owed thanks to several, this little book might go without a preface. To the Editor of the *Cape Times*, Mr. Maitland Park, I am indebted for permission to use the material first prepared for his columns; to Mr. G. H. Wilson, of the same paper, for the help of his researches. If Mr. Lewis, the Librarian of the Cape Town Public Library, were still alive, it would be pleasant to thank him for learned assistance in happy days gone by: as he is dead I can only add my little tribute to his memory. To the Rev. Mr. Leibbrandt, late Keeper of the Cape Archives, all students of South African history must be grateful, and the Cape Government deserves recognition for the work they have done in the publication of the Archives, work which one may hope will be continued. For the share in this work of Dr. Theal, the late Colonial Historiographer, especially his translation of Portuguese State papers, I am also grateful, though, like Professor Cappon and other predecessors, I must in honesty confess disappointment in his historical writings. To

## THE ROMANCE OF SOUTH AFRICA

Mr. Boosé, Librarian of the Royal Colonial Institute,  
and his Assistant, I owe much thanks; and also to  
Mr. J. P. Collins and Dr. C. I. Leipold.

I. D. C.

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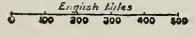
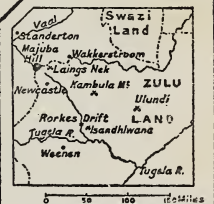
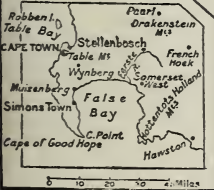
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### MAP







## CHAPTER I

### THE LAND OF PRESTER JOHN

IF we would understand how South Africa came to be discovered, we must go back a very long time—to the days before either England or Holland was a power on the sea. Every one has heard of Christopher Columbus, and most people know the name of Vasco da Gama; but not so many, perhaps, realise the springs of action that led these sailors to make their great voyages, and some may be surprised to hear that the search for the road to the Indies was a move in the great struggle between the Cross and the Crescent, and Bartholomew Diaz and Vasco da Gama were just as much Crusaders as Richard Cœur de Lion.

In the middle of the fifteenth century Portugal was engaged in a truceless war with the Moors of North Africa. In this, the little country was only taking a part in the general war between Christians and Mahomedans that was waged all along the Mediterranean from east to west. Spain also took part in it, and so did Genoa and Venice, and the Knights of St. John at Malta, and even little England away in the rear of Christendom, sent her troops to defend the frontier. In those days Christendom was one nation, with one emperor and one pope, and all the European peoples knew that the war concerned not the part but the whole. For the Crescent had penetrated into

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Europe as far as France, and the Holy Sepulchre, which was then the shrine of all Christians, was in the hands of the Infidels.

In their part of the battlefield the Portuguese carried on a desperate war. They sent army after army into the north of Africa, they took the Moorish town of Ceuta, but they were beaten back from the walls of Tangier. Scimitar against sword, both sides fought with desperate valour, and the deeds of the heroes are still remembered in song and legend. On the Christian side, among the chief of these paladins was Prince Henry, one of the Royal Infants of Portugal. We hear of him holding the gate of Ceuta against a thousand Infidels; but in the end the power of the Crescent was too strong for him. He was gradually driven back, and was forced to return to his country, leaving his brother, the brave Prince Ferdinand, a prisoner in the hands of the Infidels. The Moors offered to set free their royal prisoner if Portugal would restore to them their town of Ceuta, and the king, torn between his duty and his love, asked all the other princes of Christendom what he should do. They replied that never must Christian town be surrendered to the Infidel for the poor body of one man, and Prince Ferdinand was left to die in the Sultan's dungeons.

His brother, Prince Henry, known to history as the Navigator, was struck with an almost mortal grief at this calamity. He withdrew himself from the sight of all men, and lived like a hermit on the barren Cape of St. Vincent.

But great thoughts were forming in his mind as he looked over the unknown sea. When he sacked the town of Ceuta his soldiers had rolled great jars of honey and wine and oil and spices into the streets, and had found wonderful treasures of stuffs and drugs, gold and silver and gems. Then Prince Henry realised that it was the



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wealth of the Moslems that made them strong, and he knew this wealth came from India. For in those times the whole trade of the East, its sugar and spices, its nutmegs and cloves and cinnamon, its silks and brocades, its pearls, and porcelain, and myrrh, and frankincense, all came to Europe overland from the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea to Constantinople and Cairo. The Mahomedans levied heavy toll upon this merchandise before they allowed it to be carried to Europe in the ships of Venice and Genoa, and so they obtained the wealth which made them a danger to all Christendom. Not only did they levy toll on the merchandise, but the whole trade of Asia was in their hands. Arab ships alone sailed the Indian Ocean and took over the cargoes of Chinese junks at Singapore, and Arab caravans crossed the desert with these same cargoes to the Moslem custom-houses of the Mediterranean and the Golden Horn.

This Prince Henry knew, and he knew that so long as the Mahomedans held this trade the Crescent would be strong. But he had heard of two things which gave him hope. He had heard that behind the Infidels in the centre of Africa, in the land from which the Nile flowed, there was a Christian country governed by a Christian king called Prester John. This Prester John was a monarch so great that all India paid him tribute, and it was said that if he liked he could drain the Nile and ruin Cairo. He lived in a land of gold and fire; the anthropophagi, with heads beneath their shoulders, were among his subjects; he received as tribute the carbuncles which the poison-breathing Indian dragons wore in their heads; he was an all-powerful Christian monarch, and if Portugal could make him her ally the strength of the Infidel would certainly be crushed as between the two arms of a nutcracker.

Then Prince Henry had also heard that there was a seaway round the south of Africa to India. How this

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fact came to be known is a mystery to us. Perhaps the Carthaginians had found their way round in olden times, and the tradition was handed down through the centuries. Perhaps European travellers had visited the Arab settlements away far south on the east coast of Africa, or heard East African traditions of the shape of the Continent. However it came about, we know that in the middle of the fourteenth century, a hundred and forty years before the Cape of Good Hope was discovered, there existed a map (in the Medicean Atlas which is still to be seen in the Laurentian Library in Florence) showing the general shape of Africa, including the Gulf of Guinea and the way round the Cape to the Indian Ocean. Prince Henry, therefore, nursed the hope that he might get into the Indian Ocean by way of the South Atlantic, and so win for Portugal the wealth which was now providing the war funds of the Saracens. Prince Henry was, in fact, on the true scent where Christopher Columbus was on the false.

The prince was a very wise and patient man. He built a college and observatory on his barren spit of sand, and collected there the wisest scholars, the most learned books, and the latest scientific instruments of his time. He read such works as the travels of Marco Polo, of Jordanus of Severac, and Macudi the Moor, and here were gathered such men as Master Jacome of Majorca, deep in all the arts of navigation and the making of maps, Abraham Zakut the Jew, who demonstrated the value of the astrolabe, and many other Christian, Jew, and Arab scholars skilled in the mysteries of mathematics and astronomy.

It was a painful task to sift truth from fable in those times, and Prince Henry, very likely, believed that the earthly paradise came between India and the land of Prester John, and many other fables which seem equally absurd nowadays. But he held fast by

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every truth he discovered, and worked with untiring zeal. In his port of Lagos he built ships, and built them so well that the great shipbuilder, Cadamosto the Italian, whom he employed, was able to say that the caravels of Portugal were better than the best that Genoa could produce. In his college of Sagres he trained sailors in the use of the astrolabe, which took the height of the sun, and the compass, which pointed to the Pole, and he launched fleet after fleet on the Western Ocean to go south in search of the passage of which he dreamed.

Now the Atlantic was then an almost unknown ocean, and the Arabs—perhaps from guile, perhaps from superstition—spread abroad all manner of dreadful stories about the Green Sea of Darkness, as they called it. They said it was full of sea-monsters and serpent-rocks and water-unicorns, that in the tropics the sun poured down sheets of liquid flame and kept the water boiling hot day and night, and that from the waves Satan himself stretched a great black hand ready to seize the first sailor who should venture thither. But Prince Henry was not to be deterred. He obtained a dispensation from the Pope to protect the souls of sailors from these dangers and to ensure them Paradise if they should die upon the voyage; and his caravels, with the Cross upon their sails, went every year farther and farther south. On they went, past the Grand Canary and past Teneriffe, as far as Cape Bojador. For long they dared not venture farther, so dread-inspiring were the stories the Moors spread abroad; but at last, urged by their Prince, they doubled the Cape and came back gleefully with the news that the waters beyond were as easy to sail in as the sea at home, and that on the shores they had so much dreaded they gathered the flowers called in Portugal St. Mary's Roses.

But then the sailors came upon the slaves and gold

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of Guinea, and greed made them deaf to all Prince Henry's prayers. "I do not want gold, I want knowledge," he would say, as they returned with rich cargoes. "Plant the Cross on a new headland, that is what I want." But the work went on slowly, and the great prince died without seeing the fulfilment of his dreams.

To show how curiously superstition and religion are mixed up with this great discovery, let me tell a story of Prester John. Ambassadors were brought in Portuguese ships from the kingdom of Benin to the court of King John of Portugal, and they told him that beyond their country, far up on a mighty river, lived a great king called Ogane, who was held in high veneration by the people of Benin. So much did they venerate him that their kings could not reign without his consent, and when their ambassadors went to visit him they were only allowed to see his foot, which was stretched out from behind a curtain. As a sign of his favour, they were given a helmet of brass and a metal cross, which they took back to Benin in triumph. Now this mention of a cross led King John to believe that Ogane was no other than the great Christian monarch Prester John, and the information spurred him on to a tremendous effort.

One of his captains, Duarte Pacheco by name, was sent to seek Prester John by way of the dark fever-haunted rivers which flow into the Gulf of Guinea; two envoys, Afonso de Paiva and Pedro Cavilhao, were to go circumspectly in search of India and Prester John by an eastern route through Alexandria and Cairo; certain ships were to sail north and endeavour to find a north-east passage to China; and last, and most important to us in this great adventure, Bartholomew Diaz was commanded to sail south by the west coast of Africa until he should come to the end of the land, and so by the south sea to India.

## THE LAND OF PRESTER JOHN

Thus, in 1486, Diaz set forth on this mighty enterprise—fraught with consequences as great to the world as the voyage of Christopher Columbus itself. He had only two small ships of but fifty tons burthen, with a tender to carry such necessaries as might afterwards be required. With this meagre equipage he went boldly forward, passing the crosses which had been set up like milestones along the coast. The Gulf of Guinea, with its torrid languid air and oily water and shores of mangrove swamps, was left far behind. The coast became parched and barren and desolate. But Diaz went on, halting only now and then to land negroes and negresses, who were despatched like carrier-pigeons with messages for Prester John. At last even the cross that Diego Cam had planted near St. Helena Bay, the farthest point hitherto reached, was left behind, and Diaz beat round the Cape of Good Hope itself, then wrapt in storms, and so burst into a sea never before sailed by any man. Then he coasted along the southern shores of Africa, on the great road the ships of so many nations have sailed since. He had now—if he had only known it—the secret almost solved; but the storms never ceased, the food and water were nearly at an end, and the tackle of the ships was much worn by wind and weather. The officers and sailors came near to open mutiny; but the captain still persisted until he reached and passed the island of Santa Cruz in Algoa Bay, near where Port Elizabeth now stands. Twenty-five leagues farther, and his officers at last constrained him to turn back, after placing a cross on the island, to which, as the old chronicler tells us, he bade farewell with as much grief as if he were leaving a son in exile for ever.

So Diaz went sorrowfully home, stopping at Cape Point to erect the Cross of San Filippe.

On his way north he found Duarte Pacheco sick almost unto death on the coast of Guinea. He had

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done his best to find a riverway to Prester John : but in the dark channels and swamps of mangrove trees, where no sea comes through, and the roots are like black serpents writhing in the slime, the fever-demon seized him and he narrowly escaped with his life.

And Diaz also found his tender where he had left it—though some of its crew were dead, and the rest so weak that one of them died with joy at the sight of the ships.

So Diaz came back to Portugal with the news ; and it is said that when he told the king of the great southern promontory which he had called the Cape of Storms, the king commanded that the name should be changed to the Cape of Good Hope, because, no doubt, he saw that it was the turning-point on the road to India.

All this time Cavilhao and de Paiva were exploring in the east and seeking news of Prester John. The two chose different roads, and Cavilhao went from Egypt through Arabia towards India. He got to Aden with some Moors of Tremicem and Fez, and thence he took ship for Calicut, the great port in those days of the Malabar coast. Here he saw vast fleets of Arab ships, and learned the secrets of the Indian trade. Thence he sailed across the Indian Ocean to the east coast of Africa, and saw Mozambique and Sofala. And he passed north again and got to Cairo, where he found that de Paiva was dead. But he met two Jews of Portugal, Rabbi Hebrao of Beja and Rabbi Josephe, a shoemaker of Lamego, and by one of them he sent a letter to the king—one of the most important letters ever written in the whole history of the world. He told his master of the riches of India and the caravans of camels that passed from Ormuz and Aden to Cairo, and the golden cities of Aleppo and Damascus. And then he wrote these portentous and prophetic words, which helped to shape the destinies of the world :—

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“Keep southward : if you persist Africa must come to an end. And when ships come to the Eastern Ocean, let them ask for Sofala and the Island of the Moon (Madagascar), and they will find pilots to take them to Malabar.”

So he wrote, but he himself never went home. Instead, he turned his steps south and went up the Nile till he came to the kingdom of Prester John, who was no other than the Negus of Abyssinia, where he was made a great noble and abode all his life.

Thus between Cavilhao on the east and Diaz on the west the riddle was as good as solved. There only wanted the keystone to the arch, the last link to the chain, the passage from Algoa Bay to Sofala. This Vasco da Gama supplied, and won riches and honour and fame ; but Diaz, who was greater than he, has for monument the bubbling waves of the South Atlantic, where he lies near the country of Brazil, of which he and Pedro Alvares Cabral made discovery.

## CHAPTER II

### VASCO DA GAMA

AND now the King of Portugal knew everything. What he wanted was a man who should turn theory into practice. Diaz had turned back : he wanted a man whom the Devil himself would not be able to turn. So he chose a poor gentleman of his court named Vasco da Gama, and how just his choice was will be shown before the end of the chapter.

Vasco da Gama was the son of the Alcaide of Sines, a little fishing village which looks over the Atlantic. In front is the open sea ; behind is a waste of sand-dunes ; on the north side of the little bay in which it lies is a rocky promontory which encloses a sheltered cove, the only refuge for the fishing-boats of the village in stormy weather ; above, on the summit of the cape, are the ruins of an old castle, and the church which Vasco da Gama built to commemorate his voyage to the Indies. In this little village the boy grew to manhood. His interests were forcibly turned to the sea by the desert strip which divided the place from the land behind, and often he must have talked to the sailors prowling about among the tarry ropes and nets of the little cove, or watched the ships coasting along from the hill above. Here no doubt he heard stories of the savages of Guinea and of the King of Timbuctoo who tied his horse to a rock of gold, and of those beautiful Fortunate Isles to which the sailors of Portugal voyaged.



## VASCO DA GAMA

And so he grew to be a man, and traded himself for slaves and gold in the Bight of Biafra. He was not much of a scholar, and he had a practical man's scorn of theoretical knowledge. He was heard to say that all men who are very good as pilots have mad fancies; and, for his part, if the king wished to cut off Magellan's head, he would not raise a finger to prevent it. There is a story that when he was passing along the south coast of Africa, his officers clamoured to turn back because of the bad weather and the unknown seas. But da Gama clapped the pilots under hatches and threw the compass and astrolabe overboard. "And now," said he, "since you know not your way home, you may as well go forward as back."

Whether this story is true or false, he was a man who would have done such a thing. He was strong of build, of middle stature, and of a fiery countenance, and he had a most choleric temper. He would stare at men till they shook in their shoes, and they obeyed him through fear. He thought nothing—as the records tell us—of dipping a Moor in boiling oil, and there are dreadful stories of his doings in India. He ordered the Arab ship, the *Joar Afanqui*, to be burnt, and looked on through his porthole as the women brought up their gold and their jewels and held out their children to beg for mercy. He cut off the noses and ears of some hundreds of poor unoffending Indian fishermen, and sent them to the Zamorin of Calicut to make a curry. When he got home from his voyage he built a house in the town of Evora, and had it all painted over with figures of Indians and elephants and crocodiles; and we may imagine the children trembling as this bluff, fiery, terrible sea-captain rolled up the street to his enchanted house.

Such was the man chosen by the king for the second great adventure. Nothing was spared to make the expedition a success. Bartholomew Diaz himself

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superintended the building of the ships, making them high and strong to withstand the heavy seas of the Cape of Good Hope. They were fitted with a double set of everything that ships required. Da Gama's was a three-master with great sails on which crosses were sewn; she had a low waist, and a very high poop and forecastle, and through the casemates of the poop showed the muzzles of no less than twenty guns.

It was a great day at the port of Rastello when the expedition put out upon its voyage. Portugal felt it was the turning-point in her history, a most notable enterprise in her career of discovery and war against the Infidel. Vasco da Gama, his brother Paul, and the rest of his officers and sailors, prayed all night in the hermitage of Our Lady of Bethlehem, which Prince Henry himself had built, and in which that good prince had placed holy men to offer the sacraments to seafarers. In the morning the captain and all his men walked through the streets to the ships with candles in their hands and all the city behind them, answering the litany which was chanted by the priests in front. It must have been a brave sight—the consecrated banner of the king streaming in the breeze, the bright vestments of the priests, and the glittering helmets and breastplates of the men. No doubt the sailors blessed Prince Henry in his grave, for he had thoughtfully provided Bulls, which he had obtained from His Holiness the Pope, to take all who should die in this discovery straight out of Purgatory into Paradise. They were of good service—more's the pity—for of one hundred and seventy gallant hearts that beat so bravely in the four ships that fair day of July, only fifty-five saw Lisbon again.

And so they sailed with Bartholomew Diaz to put them safely on their way. He saw them as far as Cape Verde and so left them, as sorrowfully, no doubt, as when he bade farewell to his cross on the Island of the

## VASCO DA GAMA

Fountains. But his crosses were like signposts on the road as they sailed south, and for many days the ships passed over a now familiar track.

Far south, almost at the Cape of Good Hope—in the Bay of St. Helena—Vasco da Gama came to an anchor and went ashore to ascertain the latitude by means of the astrolabe which stood upon a tripod and gave best results when used on shore.

His sailors, you may be sure, were glad to have a run on land after the long voyage cooped up on shipboard. Some went off among the rocks to catch crayfish, and Paul da Gama set out with a boat a-whale-fishing in the bay. They were reckless fishers. Paul stuck two harpoons into a whale, and if the ropes had not been long and the sea shallow there would have been a sorry end to their fishing, for they had made fast the harpoon lines round one of the thwarts. As it was, the boat went over the bay like a flash of light, with the gunwale dipping under the water, before the whale, by good luck, ran himself ashore.

As the Captain and Pedro d'Alanquer, his famous pilot, were taking the height of the sun, the company spied two little men behind a hillock stooping as if they were gathering herbs. Da Gama made a sign, and all the sailors drew softly upon them, creeping through the low shrub among the sand-hills. Then, without being seen, they surrounded the little men, who were working away among the bushes with lighted torches to keep off the bees, as they dug out the honey. They were such men as the Portuguese had never seen before—naked indeed, like the men of Guinea, but not so black. They were filthy and small, almost as much like baboons as men; and their hair was twisted in beads, stuck here and there upon their heads like black peppercorns. But their language was the strangest part of them, for, as one of the old sailors put it, they “clocked in their speech like a brood hen.” For besides vowels they have

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various clicks of which their language is full. Some people say that this race of pigmies long long ago dwelt in the very north of Africa, and are identical with an aboriginal tribe that lived in the Delta of the Nile. They have been driven ever south by stronger nations until at last the miserable remnant found a refuge in the most barren part of Southern Africa. Certain it is that some of their beliefs and superstitions have a smack of Egypt. For example, they have as a sort of tribal totem the scarab beetle; and their wall paintings in red and black ochre, which I have seen for myself on the walls of the caves in which they used to live, may derive from the frescoes of the Egyptian tombs, while they have among their stories a legend almost exactly similar to the story of the dividing of the Red Sea. They are, indeed, a wonderful little people, or I should say they were, for they have been hunted out of their last refuges, and their old hunting-grounds know them no more.

The two little men were gradually surrounded, as I have said, and then the Portuguese made a rush. One of the bushmen escaped, doubling through the bushes like a hare; but the other was captured. He was, however, so afraid that he would neither speak nor eat until all the men went away, leaving only two cabin boys who sat beside him and made friends. But when he did begin to speak even the men who knew the language of Guinea could make nothing of what he said. However, he was given some toy bells and glass beads, and, going off in high glee, brought back a large number of his people. They were shown gold and silver and spices, but made no sign of knowledge, though they were delighted with the food and beads which they received.

The sailors were somewhat mistrustful of these strange people; but one of them, Fernao Veloso by name, boasted that he would go with them. Off he

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went, swaggering bravely, with a troop of the little men trotting about him. A little way inland he came upon their encampment, where they lived in little holes scooped in the ground with branches bent over them and the skin of an animal over the branches. They made a feast in honour of the stranger ; but to Veloso's horror it was the raw flesh of an animal which they tore to pieces before his eyes ; and they offered him the entrails as a choice delicacy. Horrified at the sight of their savagery, Veloso felt his valour ooze out of him, and in a panic he took to his heels and ran for the boats.

The little bushmen picked up their bows and assegais and made after him. But Veloso, winged by fear, ran to such good purpose that he reached the landing-place before they could catch up to him. As he came down the hill towards the shore he shouted most lustily, but the sailors, who had just put off to the ships with their cargoes of whale meat, only lay on their oars and laughed. For Veloso was known through the fleet as a boaster, who was "always speaking of his courage," and the sailors vastly enjoyed this exhibition of his bravery. However, Vasco da Gama ordered them to row to the rescue, and as they reached the shore the runner, with one last mighty effort, leapt into a boat. The pursuers were close upon his heels ; but whether they meant evil or no is not quite clear. Whatever they intended the sailors did not trust them, and struck at them with oars and boathooks. In reply came a shower of bone-tipped arrows and assegais, one of which wounded Vasco da Gama in the foot, while two sailors were also wounded. The Portuguese shot at the savages with their cross-bows, hitting several, and then made for the ships. So ended the first unlucky meeting between white men and the people of South Africa.

Then the ships rounded the Cape of Good Hope

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“with less storm and perils than the sailors expected from the opinion they had of it, which had caused them to give it the name of Cape of Storms.” They had good weather, and “sailed along the coast with much pleasure, merry-making, and playing of trumpets.” They kept close to the land so that they could see it was covered with verdure, on which grazed herds of cattle and sheep. At one place, now called Mossel Bay, they landed on the Sunday of the feast of Saint Catherine, 25th November 1497, and there saw herds of elephants. The negroes came down to meet them, riding on oxen saddled with packs of reeds after the Spanish fashion. They entertained the strangers hospitably: “Our men,” says de Barros, “had great pleasure from these people, for they were joyous and given to playing and dancing, and among them were some who played very well upon a kind of pastoral flute, after their own fashion.” But soon there were quarrels over the barter of cattle, and the fleet sailed on. They passed an island covered with thousands of seals, “so savage that they attacked men like bulls” and wondered at the penguins “of the size of a wild goose, that cannot fly as they have no feathers on their wings, which are only covered with skin like those of bats.” Then they were buffeted by a storm which filled the sailors with terror, so that “they did nothing but call upon God, thinking more of repenting of their sins than of managing the sails, for the shadow of death was over everything.” But they came through it, and with great rejoicing they passed the islet where Diaz planted his last cross. On the feast of the Nativity they passed the coast of Natal, to which they gave its beautiful name, and so hopefully they sailed on, perceiving now that they were going north.

Yet Vasco da Gama must have been an anxious man, for his crews were sorely afflicted with scurvy; the flesh of their gums swelled so that their mouths could

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hardly contain it, and as it swelled it decayed, so that they cut it away like dead flesh, a most pitiful thing to see. Hitherto they had seen nothing but savages and the wilderness. But at last he saw something which rejoiced his heart—two sails, just such sails as might be seen on the coast of Morocco, long and upward-pointed like the wings of a swallow. Ships of the Moors they were in very truth—long, pointed, brown sails on the blue of the sea hard under the green shore. Then they were gone; but the Portuguese following close came into a great river (the Zambesi itself) and saw the ships again lying in a little harbour under the trees. There was a knot of men about them, some naked savages like those of Guinea; but at the sight of the others the Portuguese shouted with joy, for they had turbans on their heads or caps of coloured camlet, and wore blue mantles which fell to the ground behind them, and vests of bright silk. One of the Portuguese shouted to them in Arabic and they replied with the name of the Prophet. In this dramatic way the Cross and the Crescent met again, and the old enemies were face to face on a new battlefield—the hitherto untroubled waters of the Indian Ocean. As one of the Portuguese historians says, da Gama had ranged round Africa like a famished lion round the fold. He was now within, and with what dreadful consequences of fire and slaughter we shall presently see.

The mariners refreshed themselves and careened their ships, and they called the place the River of Good Signs. From that time it was as if they were sailing in the blue Mediterranean. There were white cities looking over the sea, and the flat-roofed houses were set in gardens and orchards, among palms and orange groves and pomegranate trees. The houses were of stone painted white and yellow, and on the roofs sat ladies in bright raiment. Above the houses rose the golden minarets of the mosques from which the Faithful were

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called to prayer.<sup>1</sup> The streets were so narrow that a man might jump from roof to roof, and were thronged with the people of the East and of Africa. There were Mahomedans "dressed in striped cotton cloths, and on their heads turbans with silk borders worked in gold, with Moorish swords girded round them and bucklers on their arms." Others were dressed in white cambric with little caps of white cambric on their heads. The Mahomedan women were in breeches with veils that covered all but their eyes, and the women of the country and of Madagascar, slaves of the Arabs, wore pieces of white cotton tightly wrapped round their bodies. Then there were merchants from India, "such devout followers of Pythagoras that they would not even kill the insects that annoyed them," and savages from the interior with their hair worked up into horns and wearing nothing but a string of beads round their loins and porcupine quills in their noses. All these jostled in the streets and trafficked in the market-places, for at that time the Arabs did a great trade between East Africa and India, with great fleets of deckless zambucos, which were not even nailed together, but were fastened with wooden pins and cord of palm fibre, with great sails of woven coir. The Mahomedans had settlements all along the coast, chiefly built on little coral islands separated from the mainland by a narrow channel so that they could not be attacked by the savages. They had come to this country long, long before, some from Persia, some from the centre of Arabia. The first of them was no less a man than Zaide, the great-grandson of Ali, the nephew and son-in-law of the Prophet Mahomed himself. He had been chased out of his own land for heresy, and he was followed by other emigrations of fugitives from time to time. And now these Arabs sold the cloths and spices of Asia for the ivory and gold and slaves of

<sup>1</sup> *Damião de Goes' Chronicle of the Most Fortunate King Dom Emanuel.*



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Africa, their fleets moving this way and that like flights of swallows with the monsoons, so securely that they had not even guns to protect them.

At first these people thought the strangers were Mahomedans like themselves, and at Mozambique the Portuguese were treated with much courtesy. The Sheik Zakoeja himself paid the ships a visit, "accompanied by a great number of canoes and well-ordered people carrying bows, arrows, and other arms which they use, some dressed in striped cotton cloths and some in coloured silks, playing upon many Moorish and other trumpets, ivory horns and other instruments, which made so much noise that the instruments drowned one another, in which manner they arrived on board Vasco da Gama's ship." Zakoeja, we are told, "was a slender man, tall and handsome, of middle age; he wore a robe, after the manner of the Turks, made of fine white cotton, over which he wore an open tunic of Mecca velvet, and on his head a turban of different colours woven with gold thread: he had a short sword ornamented with gold and jewels in his girdle, a dagger of the same fashion, and velvet sandals on his feet." There were stately courtesies between this chief and the armour-clad Portuguese, and da Gama obtained provisions and two pilots to take him to Calicut. Subsequently, however, the Arabs found that their visitors were Christians, and tried to wreck or entrap the ships. But da Gama, by a judicious use of boiling oil, discovered their plot, and by placing a sailor armed with a stick over the pilot, was able to proceed on his voyage.

Concealed or unconcealed, it was war between Christian and Moslem in the Indian Ocean from the time that da Gama raised the altar on the Island of Saint George over against Mozambique, so that the Christian evensong met the cry of the muezzin across the blue palm-fringed waters of the Indian Ocean. And the great guns of the *San Rafael* roared a dreadful warning

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of a new Holy War in the East, where the Christians took the Moslems on their unprotected rear, and fell upon them with such slaughter that merely to read of it leaves us aghast.

We must not follow the Portuguese to India, as it takes us too far from our history. Sufficient to say that they found at Calicut a great city of rich and well-governed merchants, where the Arabs traded from east and west, and they found the Zamorin a wise and courteous prince who lived in a palace of marble and rare woods. The visitors began by giving thanks to the Virgin in a temple which they thought was a church, for the Portuguese had believed that the Indians were the Christian subjects of Prester John; but they were somewhat puzzled by saints which had teeth a span long and a hundred arms. They obtained a cargo of nutmeg and cinnamon, pepper and silk; but instead of complying with the usages of the port, da Gama carried things with a very high hand.

Then the Portuguese sailed homewards, and a terrible voyage it was, for with the heat of the sun and the tropic winds, the bad food and the bad water, the men sickened and died like flies. Scurvy laid its dreadful hand upon the ships, and the dying sailors lay in the scuppers, their flesh turning black and putrid before death. The crews revived somewhat with the cool airs of the Cape; but in the Gulf of Guinea, where the very water seems to crawl with worms and foul emanations rise from the sea, they grew much worse, so that there were not enough men to work the sails of the two ships, for one had been abandoned and burnt on the east coast of Africa. Paul da Gama, who was as much loved by the sailors as his brother was feared, comforted the sick until he himself was struck down, and as month followed month, and the sea grew from cold to hot and from hot to cool again, he grew weaker. Vasco sat over him, appearing to care not

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how the ship went or whether it were day or night. Then a great storm fell upon them, and they laboured under shortened sail till they came to the Island of Santiago. Here, Vasco made John da Sa captain of his ship, and he lifted his brother and placed him in a little caravel that he found at the island. So he took him to Terceira, always hoping that in those tranquil and happy isles the sick man might get well. But Paul died in the monastery of St. Francis, where he was shrived and buried by the good fathers.

The news of the great voyage had already been brought to Lisbon by Nicholas Coelho, the captain of the second ship ; but Vasco, when he arrived, did not so much as enter the city. He went straightway to the Hermitage of Our Lady of Bethlehem, where he had prayed with his brother, side by side, on the eve of their adventure ; and there the great men of the kingdom found him when they came to do him honour, kneeling, with head bowed, before the image of the Virgin.

## CHAPTER III

### THE STORY OF ALMEIDA

FOUR hundred years ago, the bay where Cape Town now stands was a wild and savage place. The Portuguese loved to see the Cape pigeons, as they called the sea-birds of those waters, and the rocky headland rising out of the waves, for it was a great milestone on their road to India. Antonio Saldanha had even climbed the mountain, by way of the Skeleton Gorge, and from the top looked over sea and swamp and sand-flat and the long lines of mountains beyond. But the Portuguese seldom touched there, and the place had a bad name. And the way it chiefly came to have this bad name is the subject of this chapter.

But to tell it we must go half the world over—to Portugal and the Red Sea and the bar off Chaul, and the little coral islands on the eastern shores of Africa—and I should introduce you to a number of people who lived far enough from Table Mountain, the Sultan of Cairo and the Sheik of Mombasa, and the Russian renegado, Malik Aiyaz, who was governor of Diu, and Albuquerque of the long beard, who wanted to take away Mahomed's coffin, and a number of other outlandish people. For the hero of my story is Francisco d'Almeida, who dined at the king's table and gave him an empire, and fought the Sultan of Cairo and imprisoned Albuquerque and ended his days with a javelin in his throat on the shores of Table Bay.

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Vasco da Gama and his friends trod heavily on the toes of the Infidel. The Moor might flash his scimitar over the Mediterranean; but he wore no armour on his back, and his back was the Indian Ocean. Here the Arab was a peaceful trader, he had no rivals and no enemies, he carried no cannon in his ships, and he was welcome at every port. From the Straits of Malacca his lateen-sailed dhows brought the silk and porcelain of China, and from India and Ceylon nutmegs and cloves, cinnamon and rice and pepper. With these he sailed to Ormuz in the Persian Gulf or Jeddah in the Red Sea, and was paid there in Venetian ducats or scarlet camlet, while his goods went in small boats and on camel-back to Cairo on the one side, and Trebezond, Aleppo, or Damascus, or Constantinople on the other. And so the Mamelukes and the Turks got their wealth with which to carry on the war against Christendom. On they went from India to the Eastern shores of Africa, to their own fair white palm-plumed cities, with mosque and minaret, pomegranate and vine, built on the coral islands along the shore, a bright eastern fringe to the black mantle of Africa, and there traded their glazed clay beads and black cotton cloths for ivory and gold and ambergris. The monsoons blew north-east or south-west according to their seasons, and with them sailed the great fleets of Arab dhows, with their pilgrims for Mecca or their spices to Ormuz, like birds migrating in flocks, and as defenceless as birds. With fair winds and fair seas and no rivals, in their coir-sewn boats, they went about their business as peacefully as a mill-wheel over a stream.

It was into this quiet scene that the Portuguese burst, as one of their own writers says, like a famished lion breaking into the fold, with their strong ships built to withstand the storms of the Atlantic, their armour, and their cannons, their crossbows and arquebuses. They hung round the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea

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like birds of prey, and wherever the Arabs fled they sought them. Vincente Sodre destroyed a fleet of near two hundred ships and galleys in two days, and Albuquerque sank four hundred vessels under the walls of Ormuz. So great was the panic that the Arabs would no longer sail even on pilgrimage to Mecca, and the Sultan of Cairo could no longer take toll of the pepper that was of old his chief wealth. The Portuguese went everywhere, plundering and burning and massacring; they seized the spice islands and fought the Sultan of Calicut because he favoured the Moors, and plundered the tombs of the Emperors of China. Vincente Sodre seized the chief of the Egyptian merchants and flogged him at the mast, tied a piece of bacon over his mouth and sent him to his master to show him what the Christians thought of the power of the Crescent. Then the Sultan of Cairo swore by the beard of the Prophet that he would allow no more pilgrims to go to Jerusalem, and that he would destroy the Holy Sepulchre and the Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai, and the Portuguese replied that they would turn the Nile into the Red Sea, and take the coffin of Mahomed out of Mecca.

It was in this great quarrel that Francisco d'Almeida set forth from Portugal four hundred years ago. He was the son of the Count of Abrantes, a valiant knight and a good commander, and with him went his son, Lourenço, a giant in stature and the best at sword-play and tournament in all Portugal. In all the land there were not enough sailors for the fleet. In one of the caravels not a man of the crew knew starboard from larboard, so that John Homem, the captain, the greatest madcap that ever put out of port, hung a string of onions on one side of the ship and a string of garlic on the other.

"Now," said he, "tell the clodhoppers to onion their helm and garlic their helm, and they'll understand, I warrant you."

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There were twenty-one ships with fifteen hundred men-at-arms: such a fleet had never before put out of Portugal.

The king's commands were to clear the Moors from the Indian seas, and build a fort wherever a fort was needed to guard the king's ships and fly the king's flag. So they sailed merrily round the Cape till they came to the Moorish town of Kilwa, on the eastern shores of Africa, and they anchored before the king's palace. Almeida was wroth with the king because he did not show the flag of Portugal, for the wolf will always find cause for quarrel with the lamb. He demanded an audience in the harbour, and set out with his captains in a boat, clad in the garb of peace, but with coats of mail beneath their cloaks and spears and crossbows hidden away under the thwarts. But the sheik was a man of discretion, and he sent word that a black cat had crossed his path and he dared not venture forth. Then Almeida swore that "he should see more omens to-morrow than he sees to-day. We will visit them in our true finery," he said; "the Moors have always paid greater honour to our iron than to our gold."

So at dawn, when the light was striking upon the towers of the palace and the minarets of the mosques, the army landed. As it pressed through the narrow lanes the enemy rained stones and arrows and pots of boiling oil from the flat tops of the houses, and the men-at-arms could neither reach them with their spears nor shoot them with their crossbows. But they burst open the doors and so up the stairs to the roofs, and they chased the Moors like cats, running from house to house and jumping from street to street. Imagine the scene if you like—the white city, the flat-topped houses, the throng of spears and morions in the narrow street, Moor and Christian on the roof, scimitar to sword, the one in steel armour, the other in the gay silks of Asia. Then the bursting open of the doors of

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the inner chambers, the shadowy harems, the quiet courtyards with pomegranate tree and vine and fountain, with steel-clad men-at-arms everywhere killing and plundering, loaded with rare stuffs and great vessels of brass and silver. Then when they had spoilt the place, gathering silk and spices, ivory and ambergris in one great heap upon the shore, they set the town in a blaze while the monks put up a cross and chanted the *Te Deum Laudamus*.

Then on they went to Mombasa, which stands on a high island, like a great castle surrounded by its moat, a narrow arm of the sea. There the Moors made a better fight, for they had landed some guns from the wreck of a Portuguese ship, and as the streets were steep and narrow, they made barricades and rolled great stones down the slope, while the archers shot the Portuguese from the tops of the houses. But Almeida, with part of his army, got in behind the town and set fire to it and the palace while his son was attacking it from the shore, so again there was massacring and looting and burning, and Almeida sailed away, leaving the cross on the palace roof and "the nest of infidels" smoking to the skies.

To judge those old Portuguese is none of my business: the reader can do it for himself. When he thinks of Tristan da Cunha cutting off the arms of Arab women to get their bracelets, he will find it hard to forgive them. Romance and manslaughter are two sides of a mirror; you can choose which you like; it is my business to look only at one, like the Lady of Shalott. But the moral reader should remember the dungeons of the Saracens where so many Christians languished, as he may read in *Don Quixote*, and remember also that in those days it was war to the knife between Cross and Crescent. The Portuguese on the right flank of the battle had got round to the back of the enemy and were destroying his supplies and slaying his camp followers. It was Almeida and



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Albuquerque, not Dom John of Austria, that saved Christendom from the Turk.

But to return, when Almeida, the Viceroy, was fighting the Raja of Cananor and the Zamorin of Calicut, his son Lourenço was prowling like a hungry lion up and down the coast. Once, with three ships and a brigantine he destroyed a fleet of near three hundred vessels which had been armed by the Zamorin with five hundred brass cannon cast by two Italian renegados. But the Soldan of Cairo was preparing a surprise for the Doms. He collected all the sailors in the Levant and gathered wood at Scanderoon. Scanderoon is in the Mediterranean, and it was a good chance for Almeida that the fleet of the Christian knights of Rhodes met the Sultan's ships as they were bringing the wood to Alexandria and captured some of them. Though in this case "the Turkish preparation" did not "make for Rhodes," all Christendom was then in alliance. The remainder of the wood was taken up the Nile, and then over to the Red Sea on camels, and there Mir Hashim built twelve ships and sailed to find the Portuguese. He and his ally, Malik Aiyaz, caught Dom Lourenço off the bar of Chaul and sank his ship. We have our last glimpse of the valiant young captain, sitting on a chair by the main-mast after his leg had been carried away by a cannon shot, shouting to his men to fight for Portugal and the Cross. Then said the old Viceroy, "He who has eaten the cockerel must eat the cock"; he sailed down the wind with eighteen ships, caught the Infidels at Diu, utterly destroyed them and fired the limbs of his captives over every town on the Malabar coast. Such was the manner of man Almeida was, a fighter for love of it. When he was not fighting the Zamorin he was fighting the Raja, and when he was off with the Raja, he started a quarrel with the great Albuquerque himself and imprisoned him in Cananor fort.

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But now I must come to his end, and the end of my story. The old man lost in his fight with Albuquerque, and, childless and sorrowful and in disgrace with his king, he set out for home in the rotten old ship that his rivals allowed him. It was a sad voyage, a strange contrast to the pomp and glory of his setting out. All the way he nursed forebodings of evil, for the witches followed him in their sieves, and it had been prophesied that he would never round the Cape. As they swung into Table Bay, "Now God be praised," he said, "the sorcerers of Cochin are liars." But he spoke too soon. There was a quarrel between some of his servants and the Hottentots, and in an evil moment he was persuaded to land and punish the savages. "Where are you taking these sixty years?" said the old man as he stepped into the boat. The Bay was white with squalls, the high caravels strained on their cables; a great white cloud lay on the mountain and fell in long streamers like a cataract into the valley; the forests of silver trees gleamed and flashed as they bent to the wind. It must have seemed a place altogether unearthly to the old man. But he went, and with him a hundred and fifty of the flower of his company. They scorned to put on armour to fight with savages; they did not even take with them their crossbows. They landed in the sand at the head of the bay, somewhere near the Salt River on the Woodstock beach, and the Viceroy, as one who still feared evil, bade those in charge of the boats on no account to leave the spot till he should return. And so he walked on gloomily towards the Hottentot village, seeing evil omens in everything, even in the sand that the men shook from their shoes. They found the Hottentot village almost deserted, for the men had gone up the hillside with most of the cattle; but the soldiers gathered together the children and such cattle as remained and began to drive them towards the boats.

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Now the wind had risen higher ; the air was dark with flying sand, and there was a great tumult behind the soldiers. Then out of the gloom a herd of cattle charged down upon them, with small naked men running and leaping on to their backs and yelling like fiends. They came with the rush of a storm, and from behind the cattle these black and naked devils threw their javelins. The sky rained spears and stones and flying sand. The Portuguese could neither fight nor run, for at every step they sank to the ankle and their foes danced here and there like birds. The points of their javelins were only wood charred in the fire ; but they hurled them with such force that they pierced like steel. The soldiers blundered and stumbled on, and when a man fell, a swarm of the enemy were upon him in a moment pounding his head with stones. Dizzy with blows, those who were left staggered to the shore. And now the Viceroy saw indeed the evil conjunction of his stars, for the boats were no longer there ; they had sought refuge from the storm near the ships. In their panic some of the men rushed into the sea, and others fled along the shore. The Viceroy stood alone save only George de Mello, his standard-bearer. He was the valiant knight to the end. "Where are those to whom you have done honour now?" said the ensign. "Surely this is the time to repay benefits!" And Almeida turned upon him : "'Tis no time for evil-speaking," he replied. "Those who owe me any favour lie behind me on the sand. Save the king's flag ; it is being dishonoured." He spoke no more, for a javelin pierced him in the throat, and de Mello left him there and saved the flag.

There he was buried, and fifty more with him, the man who had given the king an empire and been Viceroy of the Indies, among those nameless sand-hills at the watering-place of Saldanha.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE QUEEN OF SHEBA'S MINES

IT is a little hard to realise that the Portuguese were exploring East Africa when the English were still fighting the Wars of the Roses, and that an army was being led three or four hundred miles up the Zambesi when Shakespeare was little more than a baby. It was the fate of the Portuguese to spend their blood and treasure looking for gold among the fever-stricken jungles and mangrove swamps of South-east Africa. The tales of death and massacre, of battles with cannibals and wild beasts to be found in the old Portuguese records would take a volume to themselves. The Portuguese believed that Ophir, where the Queen of Sheba got her gold, was somewhere in the interior, inland from Sofala. At Sofala itself they had built a fort in a mangrove swamp on the edge of a fever-haunted river, and there Pedro d'Anhaya had first fought the savages, then massacred the Moors of the neighbouring village, and last of all died of fever with most of his men and was buried alongside of them in the hot, foetid, squelching mud of the river-banks. But all the gold that was brought down from Sofala was a little dust sealed up in quills, which the natives sold for striped cloth and strings of blue and yellow beads made of potter's clay. It came from mines far inland, and the Portuguese thought if they could only reach these

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mines they would find more wealth than the Spaniards had got in Mexico.

The stories grew as the years went on, until fifty years after Pedro d'Anhaya was sung to his last sleep by the frogs of the Sofala river, all Portugal was in a fever to find the gold-fields. The stories were prodigious. The gold, says one writer, was so plentiful that great lumps of it were forced up out of the ground by the trees, and were to be found in the forks of the branches. Diego de Couto tells of a nugget "like a large yam" that in its rough state weighed twelve thousand cruzados, and of places where nuggets lay on the ground like ginger in the Indies. That this mine could be no other than Solomon's Ophir was plain, for "the Kaffirs call it Fur or Fura, and the Moors Aufur, and altering a few letters in both names, with little change in pronunciation — which these barbarians corrupt—the sound is very similar to Ophir."

It was to find these mines that young King Sebastian sent his greatest soldier, Francisco Barreto, with a splendidly equipped army to Mozambique. Francisco Barreto had fought the Moors in North Africa and had been Governor of India. He was a man advanced in years, and was as true a gentleman as he was a soldier. At the time he was appointed to the command of the expedition he was general of the galleys, and his soldiers and sailors, who loved him like a father, mobbed his vessel in their eagerness to be enrolled. The force was to consist of three ships and a thousand soldiers, and of the six hundred in Barreto's ship half were noblemen and two hundred servants of the king. So many men applied, indeed, that the officers sorted out the best of them in the galleys, and there were enough left over to man another fleet. Of all that brilliant assemblage which set out that brave day of April 1569 with so much pomp, with processions of priests, and waving of banners and blare of martial trumpets, only

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a few fever-stricken wretches were destined to see Portugal again.

Of the expedition we have two excellent accounts, one by Diego de Couto, himself a soldier, who had been in the Indies and East Africa and had conversed with the leaders of the expedition though he had not taken part in it. It is a clear and graphic narrative, and agrees in the main with the other account by the Jesuit Father Monclaro, who accompanied the expedition.

Where the two differ is that the first is, as we should say now, anti-clerical. The king, Dom Sebastian, was young, and leaned much upon Jesuit advice, and de Couto says that Monclaro, who represented the power behind the throne, was the malign influence of the expedition, upsetting all the plans and bringing upon it all the disasters from which it suffered. Upon this side of the story Father Monclaro, as might be expected, maintains a discreet reserve.

The affair began badly. One of the ships had to put back into port, and Barreto had to winter in Brazil. Then when the force got to Mozambique there was vexatious delay. De Couto says that Barreto and all his officers desired to go by way of Sofala, the most direct route to the mines; but Monclaro, by pressure and intrigue, forced the general to go up the Zambesi so as to march to the mines through the territories of the Monomotapa. A Jesuit father had been killed by that great chief, as we shall see in our next chapter, and de Couto says that the Jesuits wanted to revenge his death and to find his bones to keep as relics. This, the soldier adds scornfully, was impossible, since the body of the holy father was thrown into the river where "it was immediately devoured by the iguanas and crocodiles, therefore it could not appear excepting at the last universal judgment." That de Couto is likely to be right may be gathered from a remark of Monclaro's that one of the chief motives of the expedition was "the

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unjust death of Father Gonçalo da Silveira, whom the Monomotapa caused to be executed, being thereto persuaded and bribed by the Moors of those parts." The fact that after the failure of the Zambesi route, the expedition was taken by way of Sofala also seems to add point to de Couto's allegation.

However that may be, Barreto seems to have been loth to start upon the journey inland. He put off a great deal of time on the coast, putting down a rebellion and collecting arrears of tribute, and then he was very nearly sailing to India on hearing that Chaul was being beleaguered. It appears, indeed, that the old man's heart was not in the work. Perhaps he already knew that he had embarked upon a wild-goose chase.

Barreto had arrived in Mozambique on the 16th of May 1570, and it was not until November 1572 that he set out for the Zambesi. By that time a hundred of his men were dead of fever; and though they were replaced by twice the number from the hospital, the expedition had lost a good deal in many ways by the long period of waiting. Still Barreto had not been idle. He had built boats and wagons, he had gathered together oxen and horses, and even asses and camels from Arabia, he had collected clothing and tents, water-bottles and provisions, and it was a brave and well-found little army of more than seven hundred arquebusiers, experienced in war and well officered, "more in the humour to fight Turks or other skilled soldiers than Kafirs."

The Zambesi filters through its mangrove swamps into the Indian Ocean by several mouths, and it was by the largest of these, the Cuama, which long before had been called by da Gama the River of Good Omens, that Barreto took his way into the interior. The great fleet of boats crawled slowly along shores lined with dense thickets, peopled by "apes the size of greyhounds," and savages who ground their teeth to a point

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and wore their hair made up into horns a foot long. "The higher the rank of the negroes here," says Monclaro, "the more red ochre mixed with oil they put upon their heads to make them look like figures from hell, and they use many other stinking things, which smell sweetly to them. Their lips are all pierced, and they thrust pieces of copper through the holes, so that their lips being dragged down by the weight they are always slobbering." The soldiers shot at the hippopotamuses and crocodiles that wallowed on the sandbanks, and made fine breastplates of crocodile skin.

It was a slow journey: the boats were dragged up hand over hand by ropes anchored ahead of them in the stream; but at last they got to Sena, "a small village of straw huts in a thicket," nearly two hundred miles up the Zambesi, where the river, at this point two miles or so broad, emerges from the steep hills which tower above its dark waters farther upstream.

In this village of Sena lived some twenty peaceful Arab traders, some of whom had grown rich by selling beads and cloth for gold dust and ivory, and they gave Barreto and his army a cordial welcome. And here the Jesuit's zeal led the general into an abominable crime. Monclaro, as we have seen, believed that the "Moors" were responsible for the death of Gonçalo—how slight was his proof will be seen in our next chapter. He thirsted for revenge, and was ready to believe any evil of the Mahomedans, and when he got to Sena he found the opportunity. "The oxen," he says, "died suddenly, though fine and in good condition, and were given to the soldiers for food. When I saw this I always suspected the cause, and maintained that it was poison, so that the governor was vexed and cast black looks upon me when I spoke to him." Of course, the animals were really dying from the tsetse fly. This is clearly shown by the fact that, as Monclaro tells us himself, the oxen of the country, "escaped the poison of the Moors,"



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were, in fact, "salted." But as the imported oxen and horses came to a mysterious end poison was a simple explanation, and a wretched groom, on being tortured, "confessed" that the Moors were guilty. "The governor," says Monclaro, "was almost forced to give leave to put the groom to the torture; while they were setting about it, the groom bade them desist, saying that he would speak the truth, and he made known the whole plot of the Moors; and the governor, convinced at last, ordered them to be arrested." The men had been dying as well as the cattle, among them Ruy Franco Barreto, the governor's own son, and this was also attributed to the wretched Arabs. They had been kind; they had treated the soldiers with a generous, though no doubt interested, hospitality, and one of them, Balthazar Marrecos, was endeavouring to accommodate the general with a loan of three thousand miticals of gold when he was arrested. Monclaro tells us of their end with cruel delight. The soldiers, he says, arrested them willingly, "for besides being revenged on the Moors, most of the gold which they had fell to their share, of which more than fifteen thousand miticals went to the king." Seventeen of the principal men were taken, among them the sheik, "and one of the plotters of the death of Father Dom Gonçalo." And then in a passage which makes one shudder to read the Jesuit describes the wretched end of these people:—

"These were condemned and put to death by strange inventions. Some were impaled alive; and some were tied to the tops of trees, forcibly brought together, and then set free, by which means they were torn asunder; others were opened up the back with hatchets; some were killed by mortars, in order to strike terror into the natives; and others were delivered to the soldiers, who wreaked their wrath upon them with arquebuses." Only one, we are told, abjured his faith, and, poor devil, he did not gain much thereby.

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He was baptized with the name of Lourenço. The fathers offered him "great consolation," and he was then hanged, "accompanied by the crucifix."

That horses and cattle and men continued to die after this massacre just as before does not seem to have altered Monclaro's opinion in the least — so true is it that people believe what they desire to believe. We must remember that the life-and-death struggle between Cross and Crescent was still raging. While the Portuguese were on the Zambesi they heard the news of the battle of Lepanto.

Then, at the end of July 1572, the general marched up the river, keeping on the high ground along the right bank. On the river itself were twenty boats laden with provisions, merchandise, and ammunition. Twenty-five wagons drawn by oxen of the country—"as big as the large oxen of France and very tractable"—accompanied the army, which now consisted of six hundred and fifty trained men, while there were more than two thousand slaves, and a number of camels and asses. Barreto rode a horse "that escaped the poison at Sena," and was "always clad in a thick coat of mail." Strange, is it not, to think of those sixteenth-century soldiers, with their shining steel helmets and breastplates blazing in the sun, marching along the mountain banks of the Zambesi into the heart of Africa!

At that time the supreme chief of those regions was the Monomotapa, whose territory, the Portuguese believed, was bounded by Prester John, and whose army numbered a hundred thousand fighting men. Little wonder if Barreto desired to be at peace with this formidable lion in his path. As it happened, there was a subject tribe known to the Portuguese as the Mongas, which had rebelled against the Monomotapa, and had also given the Portuguese traders a good deal of trouble. Barreto adopted the same policy as the Boers later on used with the Zulus; to conciliate the Monomotapa he

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offered to punish his troublesome rebels. As the Mongas lived south-west of Barreto's position on the river, the Portuguese left their many sick with the boats at an island and marched across country, now only some five hundred strong. It was a terrible march, the soldiers broiling in their steel and buff, breaking through thorns and clambering over rocks hot with the sun. The water was scarce and bad, and many of them fell out through thirst and dysentery.

But at last, after marching for nine days, they saw the enemy, at first only scouts, who raised a great cloud of dust by "whirling sticks with buffalo tails attached to them," and then upon a level plain covered with grass and tall reeds they came upon an army of ten or twelve thousand men. It is very interesting to note that Barreto drew up his men in a hollow square, two companies before the wagons, two on the sides, and one behind, so that the baggage was in the centre, and the artillery seem to have been placed round the square much in the modern manner. "He commanded," says de Couto, "a swivel-gun (swivel-falcon, Monclaro calls it) to be placed in the rear, cannon and demi-cannon on the flanks, and three field pieces loaded with cast-iron balls in the vanguard." Indeed Barreto marched exactly in the same way against the Mongas as Lord Chelmsford three centuries after marched against the Zulus at Ulundi. And the Mongas adopted the same tactics as the Zulus. "They advanced in the form of a crescent," says Monclaro, "and almost surrounded us on every side." Both accounts speak of the enemy using arrows, but it is easy to understand how these might be confused with the thrown assegai. In the various fights the Mongas charged bravely, advancing almost to the guns.

"The Kafirs," says de Couto, "approached in a semicircle, preceded by an aged woman whom they looked upon as a great sorceress. When near our army

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she took a small quantity of dust from a gourd which she carried, and threw it into the air, by which she had made Mongas believe all our men would be blinded and fall into their hands. This they so firmly believed that they had brought many ropes with which to bind them. The governor, seeing the old Kafir woman making antics before them all, thought that she must be a sorceress, and commanded the gunner to fire the falcon at her, which he did, taking such good aim that the ball shattered the wretched creature, which seemed to stupefy the Kafirs, as they believed her to be immortal. For this the governor took off a handsome gold chain which he wore, and put it round the gunner's neck. This did not prevent the Kafirs from falling upon our men in savage disorder, with great cries and shouts, brandishing their swords and darts which they call pomberas."

The swords may have been stabbing assegais, and it is worth noting that the Mongas also carried the knobkerry.

As for Monclaro, he led the fight with his crucifix, like the fanatic he was. "It was noticed that wherever I was with the crucifix, although the arrows were numerous, no one was wounded by them within ten or twelve paces of it; and, looking up in some fear of the arrows, I observed that though many seemed falling on my head, the Lord, whose image I carried in my hands, diverted them, so that they left as it were an open space, within which no one was wounded, although I was in the front, and they came with great force, the wind being now in their favour."

Barreto's generalship and his arquebuses and cannon were too much for the Mongas. They thought that the white men were wizards, who had "medicine" too potent to be overcome. When the smoke of the guns enveloped the little square in a cloud, "the enemy was astonished, saying that we were great wizards, since we could turn day into night." At last, after a fight in which



Barreto Fights the Kafirs

SMITHSONIAN



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Barreto defended a laager made of tree-trunks and brush-wood, and after more than four thousand of the enemy had been slain, the chief sued for peace. Barreto received the ambassadors in state, seated in a velvet-covered chair. "The governor wore a strong coat of mail with sleeves, with a sword ornamented with silver hung crossways, and a page stood near him with a shield of shining steel. When the Kafir was brought before him he was so overcome with amazement that he could not speak or answer any of the questions put to him, but trembled from head to foot." The natives were still more frightened when they saw the camels, which, they were assured, fed upon human flesh, and they agreed to Barreto's terms with the most respectful alacrity.

Nevertheless, in this first great campaign between the black man and the white in South Africa, it was the white man that was really beaten. The Portuguese were encumbered by sixty wounded and many sick; they were short of provisions and water; in front of them was a wilderness of scrub and rock. Barreto ordered the retreat, and fell back upon the boats.

It was a disastrous retreat. The only water was that of the "stagnant pools left from the winter, exposed to the sun, and covered with green slime; and even this was scarce." "It was crawling, and it stank," and so many fell sick that there were none to carry them. "Even Francisco Barreto carried the sick behind him on his horse." Thus they retraced their steps a weary seventy miles, and at last, starving and tottering, the little army reached the boats.

This was but the beginning of disaster. Barreto heard that there was intrigue against him at Mozambique, so he left his little force at Sena and hastened to the coast. At the fortress he found the aged governor, whom he had himself installed, had drawn up lying statements against him addressed to the king, and had forced many to sign them. Barreto took the

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governor, an old sinner of eighty, to a little chapel—"the hermitage of the Holy Ghost, which faces the old fortress on a rock overhanging the sea, and is reached by a bridge." There they went alone and prayed and heard Mass. Then Barreto came out again, and, "leaning his back against a support, he drew Antonio Pereira to him. Some persons told me," says de Couto, "that they saw Francisco Barreto prepare a dagger which he wore in his belt, and that Antonio Pereira Brandao fell on the ground and clasped him round the legs two or three times. The governor bent down and raised him, and, putting his hand into his pocket, he drew out the papers that had been directed to the king. Upon seeing them Antonio Pereira was astounded and burst into tears, and, falling at the governor's feet he begged for mercy with sobs which could be heard by those who had remained at a distance. The governor, who was very kind-hearted and compassionate, turned his back and went towards the fortress with his eyes full of tears, as if it had been he who was the culprit. He was so fatigued that he seemed as if he had been engaged in some laborious task."

Poor Barreto! He himself was an old man. After sailing he heard that his wife had died of the pest in Lisbon. His son had died at Sena. Now his friend had proved a traitor, and he knew that his army was dying by inches in the swamps of the Zambesi. He did what could be done. He collected comforts and provisions for the sick, and returned up that dolorous river. When he reached Sena his heart must have been like to break. On the river bank fifty soldiers waited to receive him. They could hardly stand, and they had no captains or other officers; but they held aloft the four banners and saluted their general. "Passing by the hospital," says the Jesuit, "we saw the sick seated in the huts, looking more like dead men than living beings, but rejoiced at our coming. They had



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the arquebuses on the ground, and one who was a little stronger than the rest fired them all, for the others were unable to do it." Not one man was in good health, and most of them were dead. "The colonel came to the bank upon a horse with men to lead it, but had a severe seizure there, so that we took him for dead. The doctor was dying at the time of our arrival, and all were in such a state that it was evident everything was at an end."

Everything was indeed at an end. Barreto went about among the sick, tending them with his own hands; but eight days after his arrival he also was struck down, and after a week's illness the brave old general died. "I went to see him in the morning," says Father Monclaro, "and found his pulse imperceptible and dead and his arms and feet cold. I gave him the holy unction, he being still conscious, and sent for Vasco Fernandez Homem to come and see him before he died, for his decease was certain. He came and remained to assist him, though he himself was suffering from fever and ague nearly every day. Close upon midnight he yielded his soul to God, in a straw hut, and we could not find in his desk or elsewhere as much as a cruzado for his obsequies or for the benefit of his soul."

He was buried next morning in the chapel of St. Marçal, "where as the building was full of fresh corpses so that there was no room for him, it was necessary to make a grave crossways along the altar, even this being wanting at his death to a man who had been so prosperous, and who had ruled India with so much pomp."

Of the army only one hundred and eighty remained alive, and they were sick and dying fast. Homem, the new commander, withdrew this remnant to Mozambique, where he formed a new army, and with great toil and suffering in the end reached the country of the mines by way of Sofala. At last they had reached the Eldorado, the Ophir of Solomon. The men's eyes

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glistened. They expected, says de Couto, to see everything gold, "to find it in the streets and woods and to come away laden with it." But when they got to the mines they found only a few deep holes in the earth, with some Kafirs painfully at work. "With the earth which they dug up they filled their basins and went to wash it in the river, each one obtaining from it four or five grains of gold, it being altogether a poor and miserable business."

There was nothing to be done but to retreat and leave the Kafirs working in their holes. So ended the great expedition, conducted with a gallantry and skill that seemed to deserve a better fortune. But it may serve as typical of the sojourn of the Portuguese in South Africa. They ventured out bravely with trumpets and banners, they fought in the style of heroes; but all that they gained was "a poor and miserable business"; a few tusks of ivory, a few lumps of ambergris, a few miticals of gold dust—and a hole in the ground.

## CHAPTER V

### THE FIRST MARTYR

ALL the Portuguese missionaries were not like the fierce Jesuit who held his crucifix before the eyes of the poor tortured Moors at Sena. So at least we may gather from the story of another of the Order, the first Christian martyr of South Africa. There may be some among my readers who think that all the old Jesuits were like Father Monclaro, fanatics who loved the rack and the Inquisition, and tortured English sailors for the good of their souls. But some were bad and some were good, and some were cruel and some were gentle, just as other men the world over, and the Father whose bones you have heard of in "the maws of the crocodiles and the iguanas," was as sweet and brave a soul as Livingstone himself or St. Francis, or any other of those holy men whose lives are like candles in this "naughty world."

His name was Father Dom Gonçalo da Silveira, and when he was a young man he went from Portugal to India, and lived a very holy life in the Jesuit College at Goa. It was through his labours that the great Cathedral of St. Thomas was built, and all his brother-priests thought him almost as saintly a man as Francis Xavier himself. He was for ever fasting and praying and reading his breviary and meditating on the lives of the saints, and all the twenty years he lived in India he spent in working for the glory of God and the good of

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his Order. So when at last it happened that a chief near Sofala turned Christian, and asked the captain of Mozambique, who was his godfather, that missionaries might be sent to his country, it is not surprising that the good Gonçalo was chosen for the work, and it is easy to imagine with what joy he undertook it. He was a simple man, as I gather; he did not know very much of the world outside the cloisters of his convent, and he believed that the savage chiefs of Africa were just like the kings and princes of his native land, except that they lived in ignorance of God and the blessings of baptism. So he packed up his new cassock and his surplice, his breviary, a picture of the Virgin, his lives of the saints, his altar stone, the bone of a saint, and his chalice, and set forth very simply upon his great adventure. With him went Father Andre Fernandes, an old man with white beard and hair, almost as holy and as unworldly as Father Gonçalo himself, except that he thought perhaps a trifle more about his food and the other necessities and comforts of our vile body; and the third of the party was a lay brother of the Order, Andre da Costa, who served the other two with due humility and faithfulness. These three holy men took ship for Mozambique, and while on the caravel Father Gonçalo spent his time in writing a discourse in praise of the Mother of God, which, we may depend upon it, was very beautiful, though he himself says that "it was no more ornament and grace to her than the words and imaginations of a soul so imperfect towards the most High Virgin."

When they arrived at Mozambique, they embarked for Sofala in a little Moorish boat, in which, as Father Andre tells us, you could not stand, nor sit, nor lie down. Father Andre grumbled a little that his superior should have chosen to sail in so uncomfortable and perilous a craft rather than go in the captain's own ship, as they might have done. Why the holy man chose

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to embark in this little cockleshell we are not told ; it may be because it was the season of Lent, when good Catholics mortify the flesh ; it may be because St. Paul and others of the saints had suffered much by shipwreck, or perhaps it was that the sailors of the captain's ship were, as sailors are now, somewhat given to the use of oaths and words that hurt the ears and the hearts of saintly men. But whatever the reason, so it was. They set out in this little cranky Moorish boat, which had not a nail in its whole structure, and whose planks were sewn together with the fibre of the cocoa-nut palm. It was after the monsoon had broken and the wind came down upon them in great black squalls. One may imagine the three good priests hunched up under the lee of the boat's side, for the tiny cabin was too foul for their stomachs, with no room to lie down in even on the hard boards, and unable to stand because of the tossing and the wind, while the Arab boatmen beat the planks for luck, or cried out to the seabirds to give them a fair breeze. It was Lent, you must remember, and they were fasting on rice and butter, honey and beans. Father Andre tells us how he asked his superior if a second bowl of beans might be allowed to him, "because as I said I had lost my appetite for rice," and the poor lay brother who did the menial work gave out altogether, upon which the father allowed him to eat meat thenceforth. And so fasting, drenched with rain and scorched with sun, with an ache in every bone from the hard planks and sharp corners of the boat, they sailed for twenty-seven days till they came to Sofala, where the lay brother was nursed and grew better. But they only stayed there five days, and then set sail again, this time for Inhambane, a little place just upon the Tropic of Capricorn. By this time the fever had seized upon Father Gonçalo, and he lay in the boat very nigh unto death, with his two friends watching over him.

So at last they reached their port, as Father

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Gonçalo describes it, "the most fitting place to inspire devotion that I have ever seen, with lawns all commanding a view of the sea." Here Father Gonçalo remained, shaken with ague, while he sent Father Andre on to Tongwe to interview the noble monarch of the land. How they both at last reached that potentate I need not tell you in detail. It was a long journey, and Father Andre went on foot. His new shoes pinched him, and first he walked barefoot and then he cut the shoes where they hurt him. "The dew was so heavy and so cold that it was marvellous." He found many rivers on the road, "which pleased or vexed me according to the time of day," and on one blessed evening he came upon the house of a chief who "brought me some green beans and a bowl of what must have been a paste of meixeira, and beans boiled, and this food seemed to me so good that it occurred to me that mixing and seasoning was a waste of time." But he arrived, and when Father Gonçalo was sufficiently recovered he too was brought on in a litter, though he was still so weak that he fell upon the sand at the end of the journey, and thus Father Andre found him, "without being able to raise his head he spoke to me." The lay brother came too; but this poor wretch was in a state of health so miserable that he had to be sent back to the coast.

In those days, as I need not tell you, they had no quinine, neither had they syrup nor physic nor sugar of roses, which were the cures they believed in; but they bled themselves and ran till they perspired, and so by these means and God's grace in the end they grew a little better. Then they set about to convert the heathen, and to cure them of their evil practices. For they found them not only scantily dressed and wearing horns upon their heads, but with the most indefinite notions in the matter of wives. Father Gonçalo gives a list of five of their errors, one of them being that

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“they swear by blowing in each other’s faces and not by the name of God.” However, they were very willing to receive baptism, and the good father baptized them in platoons. The chief he called King Constantino, and the chief wife was called Queen Isabel, while the sons and the courtiers and the counsellors of the realm were renamed after the leading fidalgos of Portugal. What these elephant-eating, rhinoceros-hunting, black and naked savages thought of their new names and their new faith is not known to us, but the good men rejoiced in the success of their pious work, and we find Father Andre writing to Goa, with a fine eye for the use of local colour, “of your charity, beloved brother, let the picture of the judgment which I have asked for contain devils with horns.”

But while Father Andre was thus planning to root out their evil superstitions, Dom Gonçalo had determined on a great undertaking, which was nothing less than to baptize the Monomotapa himself. Now the Monomotapa was the supreme king of those parts. He could muster overwhelming strength when he wanted to make war, so that naturally he had great influence over the whole of the country, and Father Gonçalo thought that if he could only convert this great emperor everything else would be made easy. But the monarch lived far away in the heart of Africa, in a wild and desert country, and it would take many long months to reach him. Nevertheless, the saintly man made up his mind to do it, so he bade farewell to Father Andre and the lay brother, whom he left to establish the new church among the savages with the horns, and plodded back to the coast.

Now by this time, which is just about four years before Shakespeare was born, Portuguese traders and adventurers had gone far into the land of Africa. They were four hundred miles up the Zambesi, and one of them, Antonio Caiado by name, was actually, as it was

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then put, a nobleman at the court of the Monomotapa. Most of these people were, I imagine, rough and ready traders, who themselves, as another good man has told us, did not know fish day from flesh day, and cared not one clay bead whether the savages with whom they traded were Christian or heathen. But they were good-natured fellows, and they helped Father Gonçalo on his journey.

We may follow him then coasting along in his little ship, and with him an altar which he set up when he landed and said Mass before it, even when the sun was so hot that it blistered his tonsured head, and when he reached the Zambesi he embarked in a little pinnace manned by the rough pioneers of the river trade. "He begged them," we are told, "for the love of God not to be scandalised or surprised at the retirement in which he must keep himself from that time until they disembarked, for nothing would be accomplished without first communing with God in prayer. He asked them to hang a cloth round the awning of the pinnace, and here he went into retreat, speaking to none for eight days, and only eating once a day a handful of roasted grain, and refusing everything else, and with this he drank a cup of water. Here he remained in constant meditation after he had said his office, and if any time remained he spent it in reading the lives of the saints." Thus the good man voyaged up that savage river, sitting in calm reflection like a Buddha within his curtain. Perhaps he may have looked out sometimes on that scene which Livingstone saw three hundred years afterwards, the dark woods lively with the song of the kinghunter, the mangrove jungle with its bunches of bright yellow fruit, the golden flowers of the hibiscus, the screw palms as tall as steeples, and the native huts standing on piles among the bananas on the swampy shore. He must have looked over the level grassy plains and seen the round tops of the palms hanging



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like green clouds in mid-air, and he must have been entertained by the great flocks of geese and spoonbills, herons and flamingoes, the starry kingfishers, or the huge hippopotamuses blowing spray from their nostrils and shaking the water from their ears. And so he arrived at Sena, where, as Livingstone said, one is sure to take fever on the second day, if by chance one escapes it on the first day, and thence like Barreto's army he travelled overland to Tete. He had to go high above the river along mountains which rose three thousand feet to the skyline, covered with dense thorn-bush and black boulders heaped upon one another, so hot that they blistered the feet and burned the throat as dry as a limekiln. At Tete the holy Father met a good fellow called Gomez Caelho, who was a great friend of the king's and could speak the language, and the two set out together across country, for it was a long weary journey from the river to the chief town of the Monomotapa. "The Father," says the story, "carried the church ornaments on his shoulders, often crossing rivers with the water up to his neck, and carrying the altar stone, the chalice, and the other holy implements of the mass upon his head, or holding them up in his hands," as more precious to him than life. One river, we are told, was so wide that the poor man, burdened as he was with his church furniture, could not wade through its waters, so the Kafirs got a great earthenware pot of the sort that they store their corn in, into which they put the holy man, and so swam with him to the other side. You may imagine it if you like,—the rushing waters, the pot swaying this way and that, and the good Father within hugging his dear possessions to his breast, his tonsured head above the rim, and his face mildly apprehensive, looking out upon that strange world, while the black polls of the Kafirs bobbed around him.

And so he came at last to the Great Place, to the capital town of the Monomotapa. He made something

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of a sensation, no doubt, in his cassock and surplice as he went through circle upon circle of clay-built, straw-thatched huts. The naked warriors who basked in the sun, the women with hoe in hand or pitcher upon head, must have crowded round to look at him, and the fat little black children who rolled in the warm dust with the dogs and the poultry no doubt roared with terror at the sight. But Antonio Caiado, who lived, as I have said, at the Monomotapa's court, and was "very friendly and familiar with the king," had been at pains to inform the great monarch that the Father was a very noble man and one of the principal people in India. So he was well received in the royal enclosure where the young king sat with his noble mother and his wizards and warriors and drumbeaters and music-makers behind. The king offered him gold and cows and a large number of wives, and when the Father, "with great humility and gratitude," refused the gift, His Royal Highness, as we are told, was astounded, and was heard to remark that as the stranger desired nothing of these things which were desired by all, "he must have been born of the herbs and had his origin in them."

The priest was at first a great favourite, for since the world began kings have been fond of novelties; and, moreover, he had brought a nice assortment of presents from Mozambique. Now one of Dom Gonçalo's dearest possessions was "a very beautiful picture of our Lady of Grace" which the king, according to the story, very much desired to possess. Accordingly, the father went to the royal bedroom—if the word may be used for an apartment which had neither bed nor wash-hand stand—and there he arranged a kind of oratory with rich hangings, and in the centre placed the picture of our Lady. "For four or five days, the king, who is still quite young, being half asleep, the Lady of the picture appeared to him, surrounded by a divine light of soft and glorious splendour, and spoke to the king with a

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great and gentle sweetness of countenance." By such miraculous means the Monomotapa was instructed in the faith, and after the good Father had catechised him sufficiently he was baptized with the name of Dom Sebastian, his Lady Mother being christened Dona Maria. Then there was a great killing of cows in the royal capital; the Father distributed the meat among the poor, "by which the people were greatly edified," and "all the people, noble and plebeian, wished to become Christians."

Alas, this bright dayspring of success was but brief. "The devil," as the monkish chronicler states, "could not bear to see the triumphant spoil of souls, over whom he had lorded it peacefully for so many years"; and some Moors from Mozambique, who earned a precarious livelihood as wizards at the capital, were just as envious, or so at least Antonio Caiado would have us believe. They drew lots with four sticks and told the king that the good Father was really a moroo, the very worst sort of wizard, who had come with a dead man's bone and other medicines to stop the rain and take the country and kill the king. This they said was the meaning of the water which had been poured upon the royal head. All this the king heard with much alarm, and he determined at once to put Dom Gonçalo to death.

From Antonio Caiado's letter and from other accounts gathered from eye-witnesses, it is possible to imagine this good man's last evening upon earth, "on the Saturday before the Sunday of St. Susanna," 1561. He knew what was coming, for he had been warned by his friend, and so he sent the vestments and the chalice and the other ornaments of the mass to Caiado's house, so that they might not be desecrated by his murderers. Imagine, then, the inside of a round hut of mud and straw bare of everything but a crucifix and lit by the glimmer of a little lamp. The Father is bowed and thin

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and yellow, for he has been sore stricken by fever, and he has lived, never touching meat, on "a little millet cooked with herbs and some bitter fruits found in the thicket." He is dressed in his new cassock with a surplice over it as for a great occasion, and he prays without ceasing. Caiado enters, and he greets him with "a face wreathed in smiles." "I am better prepared to die," he says, "than the enemies who are to kill me. I forgive the king, who is but a youth, and his mother, because the Moors have deceived them." Caiado is moved to tears and takes his leave, but sends two of his servants to bear him company. They remained all night and saw all that happened. The Father walked up and down upon a piece of ground near the hut until close upon midnight. "His steps were hurried, as if he wished to be already free and reigning with Christ; his eyes were nearly always raised to heaven, his hands now raised, now extended in the form of a cross, his deep and heartfelt sighs came from his inmost soul." Then he entered the hut and prayed before the crucifix, and lay down on a mat of reeds with the crucifix beside him and the lamp alight.

And so I should like to leave the poor good man, but as he slept and the night drew towards morning and the servants watched, a dark figure crossed the light in the door. Then another and another, black and naked savages, till eight of them stand over the sleeping form on the mat. At least it did not take long to extinguish the flickering spark. A knee on the chest, a rope round the neck, perhaps one groan and the blood at mouth and nose. And so the end; as the old monk says, "he gave up his spirit to the creator."

When Antonio Caiado and his servants came the next day at dawn they found a track of blood leading to the river and on the floor lay a broken crucifix.

Such was the "happy end," as he himself would have called it, of the holy Father Dom Gonçalo da

## THE FIRST MARTYR

Salveira, the first Christian martyr of South Africa. His bones were never found; but the story of his life and death has in itself the virtue of a relic.

And now let me go back for a moment to his friend Father Andre Fernandes, whom he left building up, as he thought, the infant church of Tongwe. From his letters to his brethren at Goa we learn how gradually he came to see that neither the waters of baptism nor the picture of the judgment nor his own Christian teaching had any effect upon these graceless savages. They first took him for a wizard, and then they grew tired of his rebukes and his threats of hell fire, and came near to killing him with their assegais. "Nevertheless," he says, "I do not think I was ever overcome with terror by their threats, so as to desist from boldly reprehending them for their superstitions, even the king himself, in such a manner that the people were alarmed by what I said and feared to be present at the time." And then they left the poor old man alone to starve to death if he liked, so that he had to sell everything that he had for food, his candlesticks and the foot of a copper cross and part of his clothing. "After this," he says, "I began to be more sparing and only ate once a day, and if I felt very weak at night I ate a few mouthfuls, not of bread or meat but a sort of caterpillar, or of vegetables of this country, the worst thing possible to my taste; and though I wished it I could not have had more than a little, having only a small cake of it every day." So he dragged on with an occasional alms of eggs or milk; and it gave him great anxiety that when he should die there would be none to bury him, because the savages "only buried those to whom they were bound." So, he says, "I thought that I would dig a grave at the foot of the chest on which I slept, so that if they tried to open it to take what was inside, which was of small value, in opening it they would cast me into the grave, and I was satisfied with this remedy."

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At last, after two years of this so wretched life, the poor old man was commanded by his Provincial to return to Goa, and we last hear from him on the coast being well cared for and recruiting his former strength, "for I had lost all or part of my faculties, and felt them all diminished." And so we may bid farewell to these two pious and simple souls, who endeavoured so heroically to grow figs upon thistles.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE SIEGE OF MOZAMBIQUE

AND now we must bid farewell to these stout fidalgos of old Portugal ; but by way of taking off our hats in parting, let me tell you one more story of the bravest of them all, Dom Stephen d'Ataide, the Captain-General of the Castle of Mozambique. You will remember that Mozambique is the little island to which Vasco da Gama came after he had sailed past the Cape and Natal and the River of Good Omens. It is only a little strip of coral reef drawn across a bay into which three rivers fall.

The surf of the Indian Ocean breaks on the white sand of its eastern shore, and in the centre of the little island is a cluster of square white houses, an old fort and a church and a hospital, always full of sailors sick of the scurvy from the sea and soldiers sick of fever from the land. The gardens round the houses are set with orange trees and pomegranates, and overhead wave the green balls of the palmheads loaded with dates and cocoanuts. Inside the bay is the harbour where the king's ships come to rest on their way to India, and guarding the little passage where they enter is our captain's castle, the great new fortress of San Sebastian.

Now Captain d'Ataide was a very gallant gentleman. I do not know how he really looked ; but he had the bearing of a soldier we may be sure, and very likely he had fought the Dutch in the Low Countries. He wore

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a corselet of steel, made by the skilled armourers of Milan, all inlaid with traceries of gold, and a white ruff of point lace upon his neck with his black locks falling over it, and a Spanish morion embossed with figures of Hercules and Neptune and the dreadful Gorgon with the snaky hair, and under it his black eyes shone like a hawk's. And he had a long sword by his side and a strong hand on the hilt of it; but as he lived at Mozambique it is certain that he was sallow with fever. And a very anxious man was Captain d'Ataide. We are now a hundred years away from the time when Almeida and Albuquerque conquered the Indian Ocean for the King of Portugal. Portugal was a great country then; but at the time of which we write it had sunk into a province of Spain, and Dom Stephen was a subject of King Philip the Third. The Royal flag of Castile floated over the fort of San Sebastian.

And Spain herself was no longer the Queen of the Seas, for seventeen years had passed since our English sailors shattered the great Armada. The Dutch sea-beggars and the brave men of Devon were everywhere, and whenever they saw a Spaniard they fought him. Just as the Portuguese in the old days sailed round the Cape to find their enemies the Moors, so now the Dutch were sailing into the Indian Ocean "to cut the throats of the Spaniards." Their little galliots, bluff at the bows but light and small and fast, could far outsail the lofty, slow-moving, stately sea-castles of Spain. And they could outfight them too. They had followed the Portuguese to the ports where the silks and spices came from; they were fighting them at Diu and Goa and Ceylon and the Spice Islands and away as far as China itself, and many a great galleon had Heemskerk and van der Hagen robbed and scuttled among the scented islands and the palm-fringed harbours of the Indian Seas.



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It is easy, then, to understand why d'Ataide was an anxious man, for he could not send as much as a carrack to Sofala but it was robbed of its gold and ivory and ambergris by these wicked rebels and pirates as he called them; and he knew they meant to have Mozambique itself, for was not van der Hagen there only four years before blockading the island and cutting out the ships from under its very guns. Hardly a ship came from Spain; but the Dutch ships passed and repassed over the Indian Ocean as if it were the *Zuider Zee*. No wonder that d'Ataide was an anxious man.

And that was not the worst of it. In the whole island there were only a hundred and fifty men who could bear arms, while some of them were sick and some of them hardly knew a pike from an arquebus. The fort was strong, no doubt, with the sea lapping against its walls on three sides, and a moat to guard the fourth. But the captain knew its weak spots. The cannon—*esperas* and *camellos* and *culverins*—no doubt they figured very bravely on paper in the Spanish War Office; but they were not even mounted on carriages, and could only point one way like a glass eye. Some were pointing towards heaven, and some were squinting down into the sea, for the embrasures in which they lay were rough and unpaved. And in some of the emplacements it was worse still, for they were empty. But if he had few guns, he had few gunners, that was how Dom Stephen consoled himself.

And now if one could follow the captain's gaze out to sea, away beyond the little palm-plumed island of Saint George—where Vasco da Gama built his altar—one would see eight little clouds of sail bearing in from the horizon. As they drew nearer they turned into tall ships bristling with cannon and crowded with sturdy Dutchmen. Men were working at their casemates and buckling on their armour, and their hymn drifted over the water—

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Voor Zee, voor Zand, voor vyer en brand  
Voor de Helsche boose vyand,  
Voor Alle quaed ons God bewaere.

Preserve us, Lord, from shoal and sea  
And fire and the hellish enemy.

And just in the same way in the convent which lay opposite the fort, the Dominican fathers were chanting a Latin prayer to very much the same effect. But the captain did not wait to make out the colours of the Republic before he ordered every fighting man into the fortress, and a strange garrison they must have been—clerks and traders, Dominican friars from the convent, sailors from the hospital, every one who could handle a sword or fire a musket.

The sea-beggars came in double line, their high white sails dipping to the breeze, like the palms bending on the island. They were racing for the harbour mouth, the *Bande* and the *Bantam*, the *Ter Veer* and the *Zieriksee* and all the rest of them; they sailed in as if they were making their own port of Amsterdam. They were under the fort and over the bar with a roar of cannon and a cloud of smoke and round into the harbour before d'Ataide could screw and twist his guns to bear upon them; but he gave them a volley, all the same, for the honour of old Portugal.

And so the siege began, as tough a fight as ever was fought in the Low Countries. For though van Caerden had a thousand men and d'Ataide but a hundred and fifty, there were the moat and the high walls of the fort to get over. Three of the walls looked over the sea, and the fourth looked down the island, over a little open plain of coral and sand with the great convent opposite, and in the centre, over the harbour, stood the little chapel of Saint Gabriel. Van Caerden landed his men at the convent and turned it into another fortress. Van Caerden came of a good school; he had learnt siege work from Prince Maurice, and he did everything that man could do. He

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dragged the guns out of his ships and threw up batteries ; he filled bags and boxes with earth to guard his men, and he sewed up his guns in khaki-coloured calico so that the Portuguese could not tell them from the earth round about. He cut trenches and zigzags and parallels till the little plain looked like a ploughed field. He burrowed nearer and nearer to the wall like a mole, never letting his men be seen, and at last he reached the little chapel, and there he mounted more guns and threw out more zigzags, until he was at last under the walls of the fort. And then his sailors got ropes and spars from the ships and rigged up a platform, floor above floor, all faced with bags and boxes of earth until at last they got on the level of the ramparts. And now they could fire into the fort with muskets and little cannon, and they were as close as if they had been looking through windows on opposite sides of a street. D'Ataide all this time had been doing everything in his power, encouraging the men and comforting the women and labouring to get his guns pointed in the right direction. But this platform was a terrible business. Still he was equal to it. From the parapets he pushed out long poles and laid planks across so as to make scaffolds that jutted far out from the walls on either side of the platform. He protected them as the Dutchman had done with sacks of earth, and his men crept along till they could fire into the Dutchmen on both sides. Is it not strange to think of them in their helmets and breastplates hanging between coral strand and African sky and fighting away on scaffold and platform like cats on a roof ?

To tell all that happened in this great siege would be too long a story — how van Caerden fought and threatened, and threatened and fought ; how he told d'Ataide that he could get no help from Spain, where all the king's ships were blockaded inside the bar of Lisbon ; nor from the Indies, where the Viceroy was

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fighting for his life in the Spice Islands, and how scornfully d'Ataide replied; and of how the Dutch built a house against the wall, and worked under it with pick and crowbar; and how the Portuguese sallied out one dark and rainy night; and of the fight under the walls with the Dutchmen on a narrow bridge, and the Portuguese, with their backs against the stonework, thrusting at them with their spears, with a flare of torches on the parapet above glinting on helmet and sword below, and fireballs bursting and hissing in the dark waters of the moat. But this was the end of the siege, for van Caerden's men were dying fast of the fever, and they were all sick of Fort San Sebastian and its fighting captain. Van Caerden had only one more card to play, and it was this. He sent d'Ataide a letter: it was borne to him in state by six Dutchmen in Spanish dress, and the Portuguese from the parapet pulled it up on a string as if it were a fish at the end of a line. Unless he surrendered, said the letter, the churches and the monastery, the hospital and the houses and the gardens, everything on the island, would be destroyed. But d'Ataide only laughed scornfully. "I have no other orders from my king," he wrote back, "nor any other wish than to carry on the war with all my might." So they cut down every palm tree and burned down every house, and then sailed away, with Mozambique blazing like Kilwa and Mombasa a hundred years before. But as they went over the bar d'Ataide, with a mighty effort, tilted his guns so as to reach them, and mishandled the *Zieriksee* so grievously that she was left flaming to the skies like the town on the island. And we may imagine d'Ataide leaning over his ramparts and smiling grimly at the sight.

Poor d'Ataide! his town was in ashes, the convent in ruins; but he had made a good fight; he had beaten the sea-beggars, and that was a great consolation. And if I am not mistaken, he was more glad than sorry

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that they had come and gone, for he was a fighter born. And now the convent ruins were cleared away, and van Caerden's trenches were filled up, and the castle was revictualled from some ships that came from Spain, and everything was put in order to give the Dutch a hearty welcome when they cared to call again.

And they did call again, only a year afterwards. And this time it was that terrible fellow, Pieter Willemzoon Verhoeff, with thirteen ships and near two thousand men. He was a truculent old sea-dog was Verhoeff, and he hated the Spaniards as he hated the devil. When he met a Spanish galleon it was stand and deliver with him, and, as like as not, when he had taken their cruzados out of their pockets, over went the Spaniards sewn up in their own sails. For those were the days when quarter was neither given nor asked. When the Spaniards caught the Dutchmen they hanged them on the mast-end, or stretched them on the rack, or chained them in the galleys, as it pleased their pleasant fancies; and when the Dutchmen caught the Spaniards there was short shrift and a long rope very often. And this Verhoeff was one of Heemskerk's fighting captains, along with Pretty Lambert and Long Harry. He had waded in blood up to the scuppers, and killed more Spaniards than one could reckon without a slate. Only the year before he had sailed into Gibraltar Bay side by side with Heemskerk to fight Dom Juan Alvarez d'Avila, the great Spanish admiral. And it was Verhoeff's hand that Heemskerk pressed when his leg was shot away by the sternpiece of the *Saint Augustine*. And it was Verhoeff who killed the Spanish admiral when the great galleons were blowing up like fireworks all round him. And Verhoeff, you may be sure, had a hand in the massacre afterwards when the Dutch cock-boats darted about after the Spaniards who jumped into the sea from their burning galleons, and speared them as if they were seals or

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porpoises. Yes, he was a terrible fellow, Verhoeff, a burly Dutchman, with a fiery face, an orange plume in his helmet, and an orange scarf across his breastplate. And now he was breathing fire and slaughter against all Spaniards, and swearing he would bring d'Ataide's castle about his ears.

He was in and over the bar before our captain could get his drawbridge up, and he started the ball by taking a carrack that lay under the guns of the fort, with thirty-six men in her. But d'Ataide, just to show his mettle, made a sortie, and retook the ship and burnt her to the water's edge, and went back into his fortress again. Then another siege began, more furious than the last. All that van Caerden had done Verhoeff did and more. He brought great guns out of his ship—whole batteries of them—and he threw up banks of earth, and cut trenches and zigzags, and battered away at the wall, till he blew a breach in it. But d'Ataide built it up again as fast as it was thrown down, and gave as good as he got, and made such a bold show that the enemy dared not storm. To show you the sort of man he was, when a careless soldier dropped a fuse into some gunpowder it was d'Ataide himself who put out the fire and saved the fort. And when Verhoeff demanded a surrender, and said he would starve the garrison out unless they pulled down the flag, d'Ataide said nothing at all, but gave the Dutch trumpeter a splendid dinner, and drove a flock of sheep and goats out of the gateway to show Verhoeff how much he thought of his threat. The Dutchman stormed and fumed, and swore in his beard, and threatened all sorts of vengeance; but Dom Stephen only smiled at him from his ramparts, and said he had driven one rebel away, and hoped to send another about his business.

Now, one day it happened that a soldier came running from the trenches, and shouted to the men on the parapet that he was a Catholic and a Frenchman, so

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the captain let down a rope and pulled him up, and he was made one of the garrison. Then four Dutchmen came along, and they also said they were Catholics, and d'Ataide treated them as he had treated the Frenchman. And in return for his protection the deserters told him how the enemy was placed, and all the secrets of the camp, so that d'Ataide's gunnery and the sorties of his men grew more formidable than before. Now Verhoeff was beside himself with fury. He did not mind about the Frenchman so much; but to think that four of his own Dutchmen should be helping the Spaniards: it was more than he could stand. Then he bethought himself of the Portuguese he had taken from the carrack, and he sent word to the captain that unless his men were given back he would shoot every man of his prisoners. Poor d'Ataide: he did not love Dutchmen any more than Verhoeff loved Spaniards, and you may be sure he did not love deserters. But he had given his word—the king's word—to protect them, and now he would not give them up. Then Verhoeff, as he tells us in his own diary, had out his thirty-four prisoners, with their hands bound behind their backs, and shot them every one. But I like to think he was not quite so black as he paints himself, for the Spanish chronicler says that he only shot six. But whether it was six or thirty-four, we may be sure that d'Ataide had a sore heart as he saw his friends fall before the firing party.

But worse was to come, for a great Spanish galleon, the *Bom Jesus* by name, sailed into Mozambique, never dreaming what sort of welcome awaited her. And Verhoeff's little galliots were round the tall ship in a flash, like dogs round a deer, and raked her fore and aft till she hauled down her flag.

Then Verhoeff rubbed his hands. A hundred and sixty Portuguese on board! Now, said he, I shall get my Dutchmen back.

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Then he ordered the prisoners before him, and we may imagine the great crowd trembling with the thought that their last hour had come.

Verhoeff spoke to them in a voice that rattled in their ears like a volley of musketry. He would shoot them, he said, every man, unless they persuaded d'Ataide to give him back his deserters. Let them choose a man who could write, and let him write well, for their lives would depend on it.

And we can imagine the poor scribe on the deck of the *Bom Jesus*, with his anxious friends crowding round him and the Dutch soldiers mounting guard.

An eloquent epistle, no doubt, for men are eloquent when they plead for their lives.

"Tell him of our wives," says one.

"And of our sweethearts," says another.

"Remind the captain how I fought by his side in the Low Countries."

"Tell him I played with him as a boy."

"Be sure you say there is one here of his own blood."

"Adjure him in the name of his country," says a soldier.

"And in the name of his king," says a courtier.

"In the name of God," says a priest.

And I can imagine also d'Ataide as he gets the letter, and reads its moving and impassioned appeals with anguish in his heart. How he must have groaned within himself as he paced up and down his ramparts, and looked over the water where the *Bom Jesus* lay with the Dutch ships about her. One hundred and sixty of his own friends and countrymen against four beggarly Dutch deserters! If he gave them up who would say he was wrong? If he kept them, how many in all Spain would say he was right? Would his chief, the Viceroy of the Indies? would his king?

Poor d'Ataide, he had a sore struggle as he paced up and down his parapet.



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But he who had fought so good a fight with the enemy fought this last good fight with himself. "No," he said again, "I will stand by my word."

The Spanish chronicler says he was wrong, for, as he argues, the Dutchmen might have been liars and no Catholics after all. I, for one, am not going to judge between them; but of this at least I am sure, the captain did not trouble himself overmuch whether they were telling truth or lies. He had given his word—the king's word. That was truth enough for him.

All night he must have waited for the rattle of the muskets in the bay. But no sound came.

In the silence and darkness of the night, as the Spanish chronicler tells us, the Dutch ships hoisted sail and crept out over the bar, and as they passed the island of St. George, Verhoeff landed his prisoners every one, and there d'Ataide found them next morning under the palm-trees safe and sound, the gift of one brave man to another.

And here the story should end, if I had my will; but Truth is not so kind, for Dom Stephen was commanded by his king, who was more greedy than wise, to search for silver mines hundreds of miles up the Zambesi. Now d'Ataide had only a hundred and fifty men, so he left twenty-five in the fortress, and with the rest he set off, like Barreto, to conquer the Monomotapa. Then the king heard that the Dutch were sending out another great fleet to capture the fortress, so he wrote to d'Ataide again, and told him to strengthen his garrison. When the captain got this letter, he saw there were only two things to be done—to give up the silver mines or give up the fortress. So down the river he went again with all his men, and he waited in his castle until ships arrived with more soldiers. Then off he started once more, brave soul that he was, up that dreadful fever-haunted river, where so many Portuguese

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soldiers have laid down their lives. But the king was angry because d'Ataide was so slow in getting the silver. And he said the captain could have had soldiers enough for both conquest and garrison if he had used the king's money aright. So he disgraced d'Ataide, and sent out a judge to try him.

If he is found guilty, said the king, send him home to Portugal in chains.

But whether he was guilty or innocent I cannot tell, for when he got the king's message his brave heart broke, and he died upon his island; and there his bones lie still under the coral sand beneath the green waving palms of Mozambique.

## CHAPTER VII

### OLD LETTERS

Now and again workmen digging in the streets of Cape Town come upon a great stone, with an inscription rudely carved upon it—the name of a ship, English or Dutch, the *Ter Veer* or the *Black Lion*, the *Anne Royal* or the *Trade's Increase*, and the name of her captain, Spilbergen or Middleton, Kerridge or Downton, with a date somewhere in the first half of the seventeenth century, and the legend beneath, "Hereunder look for letters." The Cape Town people are proud of these old stones; they have kept some in the museum, and built one into the wall of their post-office—an appropriate place for it, since, in the old days, long before there was any Adderley Street, or indeed any town or house at all round Table Bay, these stones were the sailors' post-offices.

We have seen already how Dom Stephen d'Ataide held Mozambique for the king of Spain against all the attacks of the Dutch. But the Dutch sailed the Indian seas nevertheless, and with them the English; and together they gave Spain in the East Indies "a wound almost incurable." Just as in the old days the Portuguese carried the war against the Saracens round Africa, and took the Moors where they were least expecting them, so now the Protestants carried the war of the Low Countries into the Indian Seas. There was fighting

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everywhere ; in coral lagoons and palm-fringed harbours, and in the crowded bazaars of the East. Such a hubbub had never been heard in Asia, and the Great Mogul threatened to turn all the Christians neck and crop out of India if they could not keep the peace. Wherever they met they fought, and there was very little quarter. Thus the great Spilbergen, after sinking a Spaniard overnight, saw sixty or so of the Spanish sailors still struggling in the sea when dawn broke. He saved a few, but could not keep his sailors from killing others, and left the rest to "the mercy of the waves." Admiral Matelieff attacked a great Spanish fleet in the very harbour of Malacca, and those he did not sink or burn he drove ashore. And the English ships fought too. Sometimes they joined with the Dutch "to doe the Portingalls all the spoyle that may bee, and to destroy their carracks and galleons," and sometimes they fought alone, as when Captain Downton tackled a Portuguese fleet and killed many of "the gallants of Portugal," or as when Martin Pring captured a cargo of "elephaunts' teeth." They were great fighters, those old sailor men who called in at Table Bay before Cape Town was born or thought of ; and when there were no Portuguese left to fight they fought one another.

To understand the story of Table Bay and Cape Town we must keep these quarrels well in mind. There were three great regions of Asiatic trade in those days. Up in the north there were ports like Aden and Mocha and Jasque where the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf took in the silks and spices of Asia to be sent on camel-back to Samarcand and Alexandria. Here the Grand Seignor and the Shah of Persia kept the peace. Then there were the Indian coasts, and chiefly Malabar and the port of Surat, where the Great Mogul held sway through his governors. And then there was Ceylon, and farther east there were the Spice Islands, where there was no great king to keep order, and so here the

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Portuguese, the Dutch, and the English fought at their own sweet will for the cloves and nutmegs of the Moluccas. The Portuguese were there first, of course; but after the Dutch had driven out the Portuguese they claimed the right of the spice trade as a Dutch monopoly; they bound the natives down to sell to them only; they fixed the price of spices lower than it had ever been before, and the natives came to hate the Dutch rather more than they had hated the Spaniards. When the English came they were forbidden to trade, and as the English thought they had as good a right to the spice trade as the Dutch, there were a good many broken heads in consequence.

Now in this great struggle the Dutch had much the best of it. It was not that they were better fighters or better sailors than the English; the men who served under Drake and Hawkins and Middleton had no need to doff their bonnets even to the Sea Beggars. There were other reasons. In those days it was not private merchants who traded, but whole nations. Thus the Indian trade of Spain belonged to the king; his merchant ships were his men-of-war, and his merchants were his admirals and generals. The Dutch took their lesson from the Spaniards. True, the Dutch East India Company was not exactly the same thing as the Dutch Government, but it was almost like a separate government. Every province and great town in Holland was represented, according to its importance, on the Council of Seventeen, so that the "Seventeen" was a national council, and this council had so much power in Holland that the Government generally did what it wished. England, on the other hand, did not throw her whole mind into the East India trade. She was greatly taken up with the new colonies in America, and the London East India Company was much smaller than the Dutch, and much more of the nature of a private enterprise. Moreover, for a long while, every East Indian voyage

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from London was a separate venture—the promoters of one might have no interest in the next—and so they thought only of loading their ships, while the Dutch were thinking of building an empire. And another reason why the English were weak in the East Indies at this time was that King James was anxious to curry favour with the Spaniards, a very poor sort of policy for the king of England. It was for this reason that he cut off Raleigh's head, and for this reason he never allowed his soldiers and sailors to fight the Spaniards in the East as openly and whole-heartedly as the Dutch fought them. He could not prevent it altogether, of course, for in those days when men sailed away in ships no one knew what they did, and the sailors made peace or war pretty much as they liked. Dutch and English were fighting hard in the East Indies when the two nations were good enough friends at home.

Now in those days there was no house or pleasant garden in Table Bay, yet it was a place that all the sailors loved; it was the halfway house on the way to India. The Portuguese had their resting-place at Mozambique, where there was a hospital and a supply of fresh food and lemons and Alicant wine against the scurvy; but there was nothing but hard blows there for English and Dutch sailors. Yet in those days, when voyages were long and ships were small, and water and provisions were bad and scarce, it was necessary to find some place for a run on shore, a change from shipboard diet, and a supply of fresh meat and fresh water for the rest of the voyage. Sometimes Madagascar was chosen, but it was too far from England; and when the commander of one voyage tried to go past Table Bay the sailors protested "that if the Generall putt alonge and touched not att the Cape, that they w<sup>d</sup> goe to their cabins and dye, for they knewe that they weare butt dead men." And so indeed they might after a voyage perhaps of six months through the storms of the "roaring forties" and the calms of the

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tropics. What they suffered on their little ships we can but faintly imagine. An old sailor, Thomas Stevens, tells us of the "heates" and "lacke of wind" of the "Burning Zone" on the coast of Guinea, so that "sometimes the ship standeth still for the space of many days." "The coaste," he adds, "is not cleare, but thicke and cloudy full of thunder and lightning and the rain so unwholesome that if the water stand awhile all is full of worms." And scurvy is a foul disease which rots the flesh, and makes the mouth like an open sore. So we may imagine how glad the sailors were to see the long seaweeds—the alkaner or brembastin, and the birds—the rush-tails and fork-tails, and velvet-sleeves and Cape pigeons, which told them that this sweet and temperate land was near, and then—

When a boy  
From the tall Am'ral's scuttle shews the shipp  
Land to the prow,

to see the great mountain with its white plume of cloud, and the silver woods beneath it and the Island of Seals, in the lee of which there was good anchorage; and at last when they got ashore to run on the green sward and drink of the clear waters of the brook that tumbled down the hillside to the sea.

Every old sailor who writes about it has a good word to say of the "Cape de Buona Esperance." "A very healthy and temperate land," says Spilbergen, "very fit and useful to be cultivated and inhabited and produce all kinds of fruits; and although it appears to be somewhat mountainous and hilly, there are also very fine and wide valleys covered with verdure and sweet-smelling herbs, as well as many green woods and bushes, where herds of stags and deer are seen grazing, all very pleasant and delightful to behold." And like Herbert he praises "that pleasant brook of crystal water" on whose banks the sailors used to rig up tents of sailcloth

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in which to place their sick comrades until the sweet air and the sweet water should revive them. So much was this the custom that one of the captains advises his company thriftily to save the old sails for this purpose, as new sails were apt to be spoilt by the wind of the place.

Drake did not land at the Cape, though the *Golden Hind* passed within sight of it, and he called it a noble headland; but Middleton—"our men being weake and sicke in all our shippes we thought good to seek some place to refresh them"—landed in the "goodlie baie," and speaks of the "blacke salvages very brutish," with whom he bartered at the rate of "an ox for two knives, a stirke for a knife and a sheepe for a knife." This was only four years after the Armada; but later on, when Dutch and English sailors grew bolder in their Indian ventures, there would be a throng of ships in the bay at certain seasons, and here the sailors of the two nations would lay aside their quarrels and discuss joint action against the Spaniards, "whereby they might expect both wealth and honour, the two main pillars of earthly happiness." It was at Saldanha Bay that the great Sir Thomas Roe set up a pillar, and meeting the Dutch admiral agreed to a truce. Outgoing ships would leave their letters under the stones of which I have already spoken, to be taken home by the returning fleet. There was an agreement between the Dutch and the English to carry each others' letters out and home, and even the terrible Coen, who hated the English as much as the English hated him, passed on some letters—after he had read them. You may see the letters still in the archives of the Colonial Office, yellow and faded epistles in a sailor's crabbed hand, and dated from "the watering-place of Saldanha," as Table Bay used to be called.

But if you read these faded letters, you will find much indeed about the diabolical schemes of Coen and



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the cruelty of his "bloody agents," and much about pirates and Portuguese and Eastern ports and merchandise, but very little about Africa. For the Cape in those days was but a port of call—a place for ships to fold their wings and rest after a long flight; there was little thought then of a time when cities would flourish along the coast, and the "wide valleys," of which Spilbergen speaks, should be green with vineyards and white with blossoming orchards. Yet there were some Englishmen who saw the worth of the place long before van Riebeck built his fort and tilled his garden. English captains were constantly urging their company to settle the place; English sailors built the first fort there, and two English captains annexed the bay—and indeed all Africa—in the name of King James twenty years before van Riebeck set his foot upon it.

John Jourdain was a factor in the service of the East India Company; in his youth he may have seen the Armada sailing up the Channel, and he grew to be a brave man whose life, as told in his *Journal* and the letters of the Company, would make a fine tale of adventure. Four years after Queen Elizabeth died he was in at the Cape with the *Union* and the *Trades Increase*. 'And cominge aland we found about twenty people or more (of the cuntrye) in little symple cottages made with bowes, better to keep them from the sunne than from the raigne, which this cuntrye doth afford in plentye. To these people we made signes for cattle and sheepe . . . showing them iron hoopes, which is the best money which they doe esteeme. And vewing over the stones where the shipps that are bound outward or homeward doe use to sett their names, we found the names of Captain Shilling, Captain Hawkens, Captain Myddelton and dyvers others. The people brought store of cattle and sheepe dayelye, which wee bought vizt. a cowe for a peece of an ould iron hoope of a yard longe, and a sheepe for halfe so much. And

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many times, havinge sould them to us, yf we looked not the better to them, they would steale them agayne from us and bringe them agayne to sell ; which we were fayne with patience to buy agayne of them, without giving any foule language for feare lest they would bring us noe more. As lykwyse if they stole anythinge yf yt weare of smale valwe, wee would not meddle with them but suffer them to carry yt awaye which they tooke verye kindly, insoemuch that they brought such plentye downe, more than wee were able to tell what to do withall." And for the further entertainment of these simple people the commander sent boats to Penguin Island—now called Robben Island—to fetch "seales alias seawolves," "to give them content and partly to renew our store of oil." There were so many seals on this island in those days that "within lesse than a daye a man might loade a good shippe with them." Having brought back the boats laden with seals and cut away the fat for oil, the rest was thrown a good distance from the tents "because of noysomenes." "Upon which fish," Jourdain goes on to tell us, "the Saldanians fed very heartily on, after it had lyen in a heape 15 daies, that no Christian could abide to come within a myle of itt. Notwithstandinge the loathsomnes of the smell, these people would eate of it as if it had beene better meate, and would not take of that which laye upon the topp, which were the sweetest but would search under for those which were most rotten, and laye it on the coales without any ceremonyes of washinge and being a little scorched of the fire w<sup>d</sup> eate it with a good stomache, in soe much that my opinion is that if without danger they would come to eate man's flesh, they would not make any scruple of it, for I think the world doth not yield a more heathenish people and more beastlie."

Besides the seals, there were penguins on the island, "soe naturallie simple that you may drive them as you

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w<sup>d</sup> doe a flocke of sheepe," and these also were much relished by the Saldanians to whom they were given, while the sailors grew fat on the fish, 3500 mullets being caught at two draughts in the mouth of the river (the Salt River), into which Jourdain supposes they had been driven by the whales which were playing about in the bay. The ships had to wait while a pinnace which had been brought from home was being set up, and a fort of earth was built with a cannon at each corner in case the Saldanians should think of mischief. Jourdain had thus plenty of time to explore the place. "For recreation myself with other merchants would take our walke to the topp of the Hill called the Table, which before wee returned found it to bee a wearisome journey." He also explored Zeekoe Vlei, and on his way saw "many estreges and the footing of elephaunts, much fishe and fowle, etc.," though he does not mention the hippopotamuses, which subsequently gave the lake its name.

Jourdain was a man with a head on his shoulders, and his opinion of "this place of Saldania" is well worth quoting, since everything he said of it came true, though those who did the work and reaped the profit were not his countrymen, as he hoped, but the Dutch who fought and killed him years afterwards in the roads of Patani. "I hold it," he said, "to bee very healthfull commodious for all that trade the East Indyees. As alsoe if it were manured, I am of opinion it w<sup>d</sup> beare any thinge that should be sowen or planted in it, as for all kinde of grain, wheate, barlye, etc., besides all kinde of fruite, as oranges, lemons, limes and grapes, etc. Being planted and sowen in due time, and kept as it ought to bee, if this country were inhabited by a civell nation, haveing a castell or forte for defence against the outrage of those heathenish people and to withstand any forraine force, in shorte time it might be broughte to some civillitie, and within five yeares able of itself to

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furnish all shipp's refreshing." And Jourdain thought that besides the refreshing of ships "other hopes might be expected."

"These people being brought to civility may likewise in time be brought to know God and understand our language and we theirs, and by them learn of other trades which may be within the country. This being in the midst of two rich countries, as Guinee and Mozambique, and noe doubt that here are store of elephaunt's teeth within the land for that wee sawe the footinge of many."

The English Company actually did make some feeble effort to settle the place. In one letter we hear of "nine condemned men landed at Saldanha" to shift for themselves, the first white settlers at the Cape; but they did not remain long. After a stay on Robben Island, upon which they were stranded owing to the loss of their boat, Crosse, the leader of the band, endeavoured to reach a ship on a "gingada of timber," but was drowned in the attempt (March 1615). The rest appear to have been rescued. We have a curious document signed by three criminals similarly marooned, thanking King James, who "rather than that we should taste the sharp stroke of death, hath graciously vouchsafed to let us be transported hither into this foreign land, where by our own good endeavours, God blessing us, we hope to live and to do His Majesty and our country good and acceptable service." Their valour did not last long, however, for we hear that before the departure of the ships, they "humbly beseeched that they might be hanged" rather than left to perish in that savage land. The commander replied grimly that he had no commission to hang them, and left them like the pirates on Treasure Island; but another ship had mercy on them and took them on board. And so ended the first and most futile of English attempts to colonise South Africa.

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The Company made an equally vain attempt to bring the gentle natives to "some civillitie." To this end a certain Hottentot called Coree was kidnapped and brought home to the house of Sir Thomas Smith, the chairman of the Company. The English people in the time of "our James" had a fondness for such curiosities. "When they will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian." Coree may have met Pocahontas, who married Thomas Rolfe and was presented at court as an Indian princess—though the relentless historian of these latter days has found out that she was kidnapped with the bribe of a copper tea-kettle,—or that other aristocratic foreigner, John Davis, "son of the King of Sestros in Guinee," so called after the buccaneer who brought him over and with whom he was two years "at the stocks." The captivating Coree lived for six months with Sir Thomas, "where he had good diet, good cloaths, good lodging, with all other fitting accommodations," and had besides "to his good entertainment made for him a chain of bright brass, an armour, breast back and headpiece with a buckler, all of bright brass, his beloved metal. In spite of all this he was not happy." Never any "seemed to be more weary of ill-usage than he was of courtesies." And when he had learnt a little of our language, "he would daily lie upon the ground, and cry very often thus in broken English: 'Coree home go, Souldania go, home go.'" Captain Downton, who took him back, reports ruefully to Sir Thomas that he bolted as soon as he got on shore, and had not been seen since, and that the Hottentots wanted brass in exchange for their cattle, "neither esteeming copper nor iron, and desiring so high a price that the sailors were fain to live on fish." The captain feared that the "ungrateful dog" was the cause of their "worser entertainment," remarking that "it w<sup>d</sup> have been better for us and those who come after if he had never seen England." And the year after

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another sailor remarked that "Cory the Saldanian is returned to his old bias of guts about his neck" (the natives wore dried entrails as ornaments); "he hath done some good and some harm there." Whether the balance was for good or harm is not quite clear. Another captain reported that Coree had educated his people, who were now "neither so fearful nor so thievish and sold cattle at very reasonable rates, while most of them can say, 'Sir Thomas Smith, English ships' which they often with great glory repeat." But Edward Blithman avers that owing to Coree the people would sell nothing "except for brass kettles which must be very bright"; and Jourdain, on his return voyage, shrewdly suspected that Coree and his Hottentots designed to lead him into an ambushade. Their growth in "civillitie," in fact, did not please him. They were no longer afraid of a gun, "whereas in former times one peece w<sup>d</sup> have made a multitude of them to fly, and whereas they were accustomed to eat rawe stinking meete, they are now content to eat the best and boil itt themselves in potts which they carry with them for the purpose." So far from a yard of old hoop iron contenting them, they turned up their nose at copper, and would not even take shining brass since they had discovered that all that glitters is not gold. "And that dogge Corye," in Jourdain's opinion, "is the cause of all this rogerye." The results of civilisation are apt to differ from what is expected, and in this case the Dutch expressed their disapproval of Sir Thomas's policy by hanging Coree and two of his companions on a neighbouring tree. Poor Coree—after all, he seems to have done his best to educate his people in two of the chief elements of our civilised life, currency and cookery—and his story is in the nature of a parable; he was the first victim in the fierce strife between the missionary spirit and the instincts of the settler.

Thirteen years after Jourdain had come under the

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spell of Table Mountain, two English captains, Robert Shilling and Humphrey Fitzherbert, both men of power in the English East India Company, were in Table Bay. Shilling had three ships, the *Hart*, the *Roebucke*, and the *Eagle*; and Fitzherbert commanded the *Exchange*, the *Bear*, and the *Unitie*. The bay was thronged with ships. Nine Dutch vessels left for Bantam the day Fitzherbert arrived, but a Dutch ship, the *Schiedam* of Delft, came in, and another English ship, the *Lion*, homeward bound. Now Shilling and Fitzherbert were both fighters and true-blue Englishmen. Shilling was an old Royal Navy man who had risen from before the mast to a seat in the Admiralty of those days. It is not too much to suppose that he had fought under Drake as a lad and had been the companion of Raleigh, and we hear of him chasing pirates in the Red Sea and sitting with the Governor of Mocha "on faire Turkie carpets and Persian felts" and discussing questions of trade with that potentate, from whom he succeeded in extracting the "Grand Seignor's phirmand" to trade, signed with the Governor's "own chop." Humphrey Fitzherbert was a gentleman of birth and breeding—and I make no doubt he had talked with Shakespeare and Ben Jonson in the Mermaid Tavern. Perhaps it was he who told the author of *The Tempest* about the island "of subtle, tender, and delicate temperance." For he writes like the poet himself of Amboyna which "sitteth as Queene between the Isles of Banda and the Moluccas" and of Poolaway as a "contrived orchard with varieties"—"the Paradise of all the rest," "not a tree on that island but the nutmeg," and so forth. Fervently he pleads with the Company not to surrender the island of Poolooroon to the Dutch: "It would be a disgrace to our nation, both here and at home, to forego a thing so slightly, that was so long kept by Mr. Courthope so obstinately."

Now when these two empire-builders found them-

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selves in Table Bay with seven English ships and only one Dutchman, they were not the men to let slip so golden an opportunity. The Dutch had taken English ships and killed and tortured English sailors and driven them out of the Spice Islands. Here was a chance to get their own back, and by seizing Table Bay to make the English masters of the road to India. Fitzherbert seems to have been the inspiring soul, but he found a ready ally in Shilling. They had already put the fear of death into the Dutchman by overhauling him on a suspicion of piracy, and "Mounsiere" Gracewinkle and "Mounsiere" Block, factors of the *Schiedam*, Captain and Master John Cornelius Kunst and Francis Duist, a Dutch merchant, were all witnesses of the annexation. The "solemn publication of His Majesty's title to Soldania" was made on King James his Mount, the Lion's Rump or Signal Hill, as it is now called, a smooth round hill where flags now signal the approach of a Union Castle liner. And not only was Table Bay annexed but the whole territory to "the boundary of the nearest Christian kingdom," for Shilling and Fitzherbert were not the sort of men to do things by halves. We may imagine the scene, the great crowd of English and Dutch officers and men, with plumed hats and long swords and bright breastplates, on the top of that windswept hill, with the high-pooped ships riding gaily in the bay beneath, and the sailcloth tents of the sick by the stream, all under a glorious African sky. The flag went up with a cheer for King James, both from English and Dutch, and salutes from the ships no doubt and an answering cheer from the sick in their tents. It was the first move in the great struggle which was fought out on that little piece of land for the next three hundred years. Was it ominous of a good ending that on this first occasion English and Dutch joined in the cheer together and for the English flag?

And now let us follow these three Englishmen on



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their way to the East, just to see what they did and what ends they came to, since they are our first South African worthies. Jourdain was wrecked on the Malabar coast and made his way to the court of the Great Mogul, where he met William Hawkins, who had been for a while that monarch's favourite, but was now somewhat in disfavour for appearing drunk in the royal presence. From there he made his way to Surat to meet the next English voyage; but found the Portuguese keeping guard between the English and the harbour. He got through them, however, disguised in "Mogol clothes," and it was Jourdain who showed Middleton Swallyhole, the famous English harbour, which ships of our nation used in defiance of the Portuguese. Then Jourdain went to the Spice Islands and fought the redoubtable Coen for a share of the spice trade. Then back to England and out to the East again, this time as the Company's chief agent. But Coen, that Dutch Clive of the seventeenth century, is too strong for him; and Jourdain, with two weak ships, the *Sampson* and the *Hound*, is brought to bay in the roads of Patani. With three strong Dutchmen against him he might have made a running fight of it with honour; but he said "it should never be reported that he would run away from a Fleming." After a fight of two hours and a half, in which this civilian "behaved with as much resolution as ever did any commander," he was forced to surrender. Jourdain relied on the white flag, and stood out to parley with the Dutch captain, when "the Flemings espying him, most treacherously and cruelly shot at him with a musket, and shot him into the bodie neare the heart of which wound hee dyed within halfe an houre after." As for Fitzherbert, we next hear of him as Vice-Admiral of a Fleet which joined with Jacob Dedell, the Dutch admiral, to fight the Portuguese, and he is mentioned as pulling down a Dutch flag set up in the Isle of Nero. But in those

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days sailors in the Indies were addicted "to the inordinate drinking of a wine called tadie, distilled from the palmetto trees." The bad example seems to have been set in high quarters, for we hear that the King of Johore and the King of Acheen did often "drink drunk together." To this amiable weakness Fitzherbert fell a victim and died of a surfeit. More glorious was the end of Shilling, as you may read in Purchas or better still in that rare pamphlet entitled: "The True Relation of that Worthy Seafight which two of the East India ships had with four Portugals of great force and burthen in the Persian Gulph with the lamentable death of Captain Andrew Shilling."

After Shilling left the Cape with his two ships he sailed to the Persian Gulf, and there captured a Portuguese ship with forty-two fine Arabian horses on board. They then came on four great Portuguese ships, and Shilling advised that this ship should be fired and sent among the enemy. "When some interposed as pitying the loss of so many brave horses, he as bravely replied, How doe they then in the wars, when they are compelled to kill their prisoners in colde blood, and therefore thinke neither of scruple or nicity, but let us follow the business we take in hand"; and he went on board the prize himself with two barrels of powder and some tar and "other combustible provisions," intending with her to lay the Portugal Admiral thwart the halse to burn together. Shilling was a determined fellow. "I leave it to you all as a principle," was another of his sayings, "never to slacke your hand if you find the enemy staggering, never to give over till you have made a faire composition or dispatched the business." "Fight courageously," he cried, "that the Portugals may confesse they have met with Englishmen." Unfortunately, his ruse failed and the poor horses died for nothing in the burning ship; but Shilling laid his ships alongside the enemy and "raked them, thorow and thorow,

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before and after, with all our broadsides." They fought nine hours the first day; but night enabled the Portuguese to get away. They met again, however, and Shilling anchored his ships a cable length and a half from where the Portuguese were moored, and fired at them until the enemy cut their cables and were towed away on the tide all "mangled and torn." "If the shot had not failed us," says the narrative, "they had scarce any of them troubled Englishmen more." In the midst of the conflict "our Captain Andrew Shilling received a mortall wound, yet was valiant and spake cheerfull, with thankfulness to God the last minute of his life."

Such are the stories that you may find in the old faded letters placed under the stones on the shores of Table Bay. They take us far enough, some of them, from the Cape and the subject of this book, yet they are properly a part of our theme; for the romance of the Cape is that it was the tavern of the Indian seas, and its story cannot be disentangled from the great conflict which was fought out for so many centuries between nations for the wealth of Asia.

## CHAPTER VIII

VAN RIEBECK

IN my last chapter I tried to show how, as the years rolled on, the other nations followed Portugal into the Indian seas by way of the Cape of Good Hope. They were keen, hard-fighting swashbucklers, those old English and Dutch and French merchants and sailors, and they were bent on having for themselves and their own nations the whole wealth of Asia. But in those days of long voyages and small ships and salt junk it was necessary to have a half-way house on the voyage to the East. The Dons held fast to Mozambique, and try as they might the Dutchmen could not dislodge them. The English chose Saint Helena as the best place to victual and refresh themselves, and our old tars had many a chase after wild pig on that lonely little island. The French laid hold of Madagascar; but the Dutch were the wisest of them all; they raised the flag of the Republic over the old "watering-place of Saldanha," Table Bay as it is now called. If you look at the map of Africa you will see that the Cape of Good Hope is like a little curly tail attached to the south-west corner of the continent. It is a narrow, pear-shaped strip of mountainland, only four or five miles broad at its broadest, narrowing to the rocky promontory of the Cape of Good Hope, and some forty miles long, and it is attached to the mainland by a low, flat spit of sand

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not much more than a dozen miles broad. On the south side of this spit are the warm waters of the Indian Ocean, breaking in league-long rollers on the sands of Muizenberg; on the north the cold waters of the Atlantic, sweeping up from the South Pole, swirl round into Table Bay. It might have been an island once, this little mountain promontory, for the sand flats are almost flush with the sea, and the Dutchmen, when they came first, thought of cutting a canal from False Bay to Table Bay, and so making an island of it again. A Dutchman finds it very hard to resist making a canal wherever he has the slightest excuse, and in this case he thought by so doing to make of Table Bay a secure little fortress against the savages of the interior, just as Mozambique on its island was secure against the savages of East Africa.

But I am going a little too fast with my story. I have told you how for years and years before van Riebeck landed the English and Dutch sailors used to visit Table Bay and camp along its stream of pure water, and eat the scurvy grass, the wild mustard and sorrel and leek, that grew upon the banks. But it was not until the middle of the seventeenth century that the great Dutch East India Company at last decided to go a step farther and place a little refreshment station in the Bay. It came about in this wise. A Dutch ship called the *Haarlem* was wrecked in the Bay, and the crew were forced to stay on its shores for a space of five months. They built a fort in which they stored the cargo, they bartered cattle from the natives and explored the promontory, just as John Jourdain and his friends had done some forty years before. When at last another Dutch ship, the *Princesse Royale*, came to take them off, they had so much cattle and sheep in hand that they were able to feed their deliverers with fresh meat, and so, it is said, to save the lives of many, for the ship was full of scurvy.

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Two of the *Haarlem's* company, Jansen and Proot, men, as we may guess, of very much the same temper as Jourdain and Shilling and Fitzherbert, had been thinking hard during their stay at the Cape, and when they got to Holland they laid their heads together and wrote a memorial to their High Mightinesses the Dutch East India Company. Their letter said very much what Jourdain said in his diary. They showed that by making a fort and a garden in Table Valley, and protecting it with a garrison of 60 or 70 soldiers, the Company would save the lives of hundreds of their men. Everything, they said, would grow there: fruit and vegetables, cabbages and pumpkins, onions and water-melons, oranges and shaddocks, cattle could be had from the natives,—and here they put in a pious word about the conversion of these hopeful savages,—and so the interests of the Company and the kingdom of God would be at the same time extended. It is an able document—every word of it proved to be true—and their High Mightinesses were mightily impressed by its cogency. They submitted the “remonstrance” to a gentleman of their service, Johan van Riebeck, who thus first comes into our history.

But before we come to him let me say a word or two about his employers. The Dutch East India Company was the greatest trading body of the world in those days. It was greater than Venice; it was greater than Genoa; it was greater than the Hanseatic League; it was greater than the King of Spain; it was greater than the City of London. Its capital was subscribed by all the towns and states of Holland, and all the cities and provinces were represented upon the great Council of Seventeen which managed its affairs. The Seventeen had as much power as the Prince of Orange or the Government of the Republic. It declared war; it made peace; it recruited armies; it fitted out navies. It had a vast empire in the East with fortresses and

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garrisons and tributary princes. It had a system of government so perfect that there was seldom any friction. Governors and captains, lieutenants and ensigns, merchants and fiscals, all had their order of precedence and fitted into the local schemes of administration automatically. Everything was done by councils, by committee; the great Council of Seventeen was over all; but wherever there was a Company's ship or a fort there a council could be constituted, and its members and duties and powers were all laid down in a way that worked with almost mechanical regularity. It was a splendid piece of co-operation of the old guild order: it was in fact a nation organised into a company for the purpose of trade.

Now in the service of this great Company families grew up and flourished, generation after generation. And one of these families was the van Riebecks. Johan's father, Anthony van Riebeck, was a stout old sailor; in his portrait he looks a little like "Old Noll," with his broad white collar, heavy-hilted sword, wide gauntlets, and strong, heavy face. You would take him to be a sea-captain in a big way by his dress, and no doubt he sailed many a good ship of the Company before he was knocked over by the yellow jack in the Brazils and was laid to his last rest in the Church of San Paulo at Olinda de Pernambuco. His wife was a van Gaasbeeck, a fine Dutch lady with as much white linen about her as would make collars for a whole Eton house, and ear-rings and bracelets of pearls—a sailor's gifts, no doubt, from Ceylon or the Persian Gulf. Their son, Johan, was a merchant and surgeon in the service of the Company. He was a gentleman of position, married to a beautiful lady, Maria de Querelleri, such a lady as Rembrandt would have been proud to paint, daughter of the Minister of Rotterdam. Above the great linen collar, her oval face is very sweet, with its full lips, long nose, soft dark eyes, level eyebrows, and

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hair brushed back to a coif of pearls. And van Riebeck himself was a handsome fellow, if we may judge by his portrait, dark with cavalier locks, a van Dyck moustache, black piercing eyes heavily shadowed, a fair white forehead and a beautiful hand resting upon the cloak over his breast.

Well, to this gentleman their High Mightinesses submitted the "remonstrance" of mynheers Jansen and Proot, and van Riebeck's note upon it is full of interest to us. He himself had been at the Cape for three weeks salving the cargo of the *Haarlem*, and he strokes the "t's" and dots the "i's" of his two colleagues. We can see from his recommendations that the young official has been a great traveller. He advises the planting of close thorn hedges as a protection against the natives, "a brutal gang in whom he has no faith, as he has seen done in the Caribee Islands." Then if the cocoanut could be made to grow they might make arrack and vinegar, and feed hogs on the wash as they do in Batavia. From personal experience he judges the Cape water to be much better than that of Saint Helena, which is sulphurous. As there are many elands, steenbucks, and other wild animals in South Africa, their skins might be dried and packed closely together as is done in Siam; when he was in Japan there was a good demand for such skins. Then "train-oil" would also yield a profit, "as I have before this been in Greenland and seen how the industry is carried on there." And the dispatch, after a pious but guarded reference to the conversion of the natives, concludes with a promise that "with God's blessing I will not fail in my zeal for the benefit of the Company, and the personal honour of your servant." Thus you may see that van Riebeck, like Hans Breitmann, was a "true cosmopolite," with a "kop bemossed mit egsperience." He was something of a botanist, something of a doctor; he knew as much about scurvy and anti-scorbutics as was to be known in



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his time ; he had an observant, scientific eye that noted everything ; he had some knowledge of farming ; he had, like all Dutchmen, shrewd notions as to the main chance ; and like most men of his time he had also—if we may judge from his observations on the defences of the settlement—a good knowledge of soldiering and the work of the military engineer. Above all, he was a Company's man ; their affairs were to him almost a religion ; the Seventeen almost a deity. He was, in short, just the man the Company wanted, and the Company, who were very shrewd judges of men, chose him for the work.

And so just about two years after King Charles was beheaded by Cromwell and his Parliament, Johan van Riebeck was given his sailing orders by the Council of the Seventeen. He was to be on his guard against, but neutral to, all nations, except the Portuguese, “whom the Company has declared to be its enemies, and with whom it is at war in the regions falling within the limits granted by charter to the Company” ; and he was to beware of Prince Rupert, who was reported to be cruising with eight ships and a Portuguese commission somewhere in the South Atlantic. He was to land at the Cape and take possession and build a fort and barter for cattle and grow produce for the Company's ships ; and “you are likewise ordered to correspond with the Company on all matters, and we wish you good fortune and prosperity on your voyage and the fulfilment of your trust, looking forward to the proper time when we shall be informed of your good success.” So van Riebeck set out with his little fleet, the *Drommedaris*, the *Reijger*, and the *Goede Hoop*, from Amsterdam on a rainy afternoon in mid-December, and you may imagine that his pretty brave little wife shed tears as she stood on the deck with her girl in her arms and waved farewell to all her dear friends on the quay and prepared to face with her husband that long and perilous voyage.

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And they had a rough voyage, for the *Drommedaris* was badly ballasted, and a gale in the channel laid her on her beam-ends under storm sails, so that every moment looked like her last. But she weathered it; and when they were well south of the Canaries out of reach of Prince Rupert and the Turkish pirates, they lowered nine of her cannon into the hold to steady her, and so made better weather of it, till on 4th April 1652, "about five glasses of the afternoon watch, Table Mountain was sighted by the chief officer, 15 or 16 Dutch miles away." He received "four Spanish reals in specie" for the intelligence, and you may imagine that many healths were drunk and deep prayers of thanksgiving offered, as the three high-pooed ships made for the land, and the great bulk of Table Mountain, with its white plume of cloud, grew on the horizon.

They stole in very circumspectly for fear of enemies; but the coast was clear, and when Skipper Coninck landed with the sloop he found a packet of letters left under a stone addressed to the commander from Jan van Teylingen, the admiral of the return fleet. Van Teylingen had brought horses for van Riebeck from Batavia; but as the commander had not arrived and the fleet could not wait, he had left them with an "English speaking Ottento," no other than the redoubtable Herry of whom we shall hear much later on. On the 8th it was blowing a south-easter; but on the 9th van Riebeck landed to mark out the site of the fort. It was drawing to the end of the dry weather; the ground was cracked and hard; winter, the winter of the southern hemisphere, was coming on. Work was begun with a will; the men of the *Drommedaris* were busily discharging the cargo while others set to work to raise tents, catch fish, or throw up embankments.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I need hardly say here that my account of van Riebeck's work at the Cape is drawn from the Commander's Journal, in which everything is set down from day to day for the information of their High Mightinesses. The Journal is the

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Van Riebeck found a suitable site for the fort somewhere near what is now the middle of Adderley Street, where the river could be led round it to form a moat with beautiful land for a garden behind it. We see him rubbing his hands over the lovely soil, "as good and fruitful as anywhere in the world," and longing for a few Chinese as gardeners. "Thousands of Chinese," he goes on in a burst of enthusiasm, "would not be able to cultivate a tenth part of the country, which is so rich that neither Formosa nor New Netherland can compare with it." He is enthusiastic, too, about the fishing; the great draughts of "beautiful bream," and other fish "of more delicate flavour than any fish in the Fatherland." The natives appeal to his sense of the picturesque: "fine fellows dressed in prepared oxhide, and stepping like any dandy in the Fatherland who carries his mantle on his shoulder or his arm." So the work of discharging and fort-building went on merrily; and Hendrik Boom, the gardener, an expert in his trade, and a man of merit, began to prepare plots for the sowing of his Dutch seeds.

But soon hardships came upon the little company. No cattle were to be got from the natives; the *Dromedaris* was badly loaded, and the supply of wood was deficient. Then the winter came on, and with it colds and dysentery and other diseases, for the men were ill-lodged; the fierce south-easters tore down the frail coverings of tarpaulin; floods washed away the garden soil and inundated the little shelters, and the men, cold, ill-nourished, and overworked, began to die fast. Thus we find, on the 7th June:—

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frankest and most complete account of administration it has ever been my good fortune to read. The springs of policy are laid bare without shadow of reserve, and hardly a sow or rabbit litters but it is recorded in the diary. Most of it, no doubt, was dictated by van Riebeck himself, and the journalist, whoever he was, took a pride in the work, and wrote with some style and feeling for the picturesque. The Journal has been admirably translated by one whom I am proud to call my friend, the Rev. H. C. V. Liebbrandt, Keeper of the Archives that modest old scholar, to whom South Africa owes so heavy a debt.

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Cut reeds in the downs behind Lion's Rump to thatch our dwellings; hope that this will be a success, as planks and tarpaulins cannot keep the wet from our heads, etc. More cases of sickness, some on the point of death. Yesterday and to-day the under-gardener, his wife, and eldest son, have been laid up, and now almost all are ill, which stops the works almost completely. We hope for a change by the mercy of God.

And on the 10th:—

About fifty men at work—the rest all ill; nourished them with wine and some greens grown from our Dutch seeds. Since our arrival not more than one cow and calf have been obtained—life is growing a misery, one after another falls ill, and many die—poor prospect for the works. We trust in God's mercy.

And so it goes on, day after day, a doleful tale. The plantations are all destroyed by heavy rain; vegetables and everything washed away. "We sit in leaky tents, suffering severe discomfort." There are dysentery and violent fever, and death after death in the little company. They suffer from severe cold; there is snow on the mountain and hail in the valley. The men become insubordinate; some desert; the Commander brings down a heavy hand upon them, for he is not the man to stand any nonsense. But he feels for them all the same, as month after month goes by and no cattle and no ships arrive. Here is the entry for November 11:—

Quieter. Twenty-four in hospital complaining of pains through their joints, which feel as if broken—no wonder—as labour is hard, food is old and so scarce that no one gets what he absolutely requires—no fish when weather is bad—the seine very old and bad—enough to do to repair it. If no supplies in cattle or from ships quickly come, the people will grow too weak to work, as peas, barley, meat, and pork are running out—the fish caught have saved provisions, otherwise we would have nothing now. Pray earnestly for arrival of natives with cattle—see their fires across the bay.

Poor van Riebeck! He had some sore trials and

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disappointments in those early days. Thus we read, under July 20 :—

Sowed some wheat, barley, and peas, and likewise other seeds. It is delightful to see how beautifully the peas, large beans, radishes, beet, spinach, and other garden produce, spring up ; also the wheat and turnips sown near the fort, and the cabbages, which at the distance of a musket-shot we have planted in very fat soil between the two fresh rivers. More ground is being prepared, and we trust to have abundant supplies of refreshments for the return ships from India.

And, three days afterwards, this heart-breaking entry :—

Gardens flooded with all the crops spoilt—a miserable sight, as we had sown various beds with wheat, peas, cabbages, etc., some of which looked beautiful—very heavy rains indeed—everything inundated—too much water for the rivers—half a foot of water in the store—canals full—a clay wall intended for a kitchen, 2½ feet broad and 8 feet high, collapsed—but the walls of the fortifications remain uninjured—did our best to make them strong—damp weather, wind and rain continuing—in the evening south-west wind with hail and rain, destroying whatever had been left of our garden produce.

Indomitable man ! Five days after he is busy planting again.

But the rain was doing a blessed work though they might not realise it. Everywhere the grass was coming up, green and fresh and deep, and the land was soon smiling with flowers, such wild-flowers as grow nowhere else in the world. And then there were more fires across the Bay and rumours of natives approaching with vast herds of cattle and sheep, until at last the “Saldanhars,” as van Riebeck calls them, came with their flocks, following the grass, a vast multitude not to be counted. Sometimes herds estimated at 20,000 were seen together. For the people of South Africa were then nomads, whose wealth lay in their cattle, and who travelled, like the swallows, with the seasons. It must have been a wonderful sight : “Saw along the

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hill beside Table Mountain the country covered with cattle and sheep as with grass." At first van Riebeck could only get a few by barter, and he gnashed his teeth. "With 150 men," he says, "ten or twelve thousand cattle could be secured, and without any danger; as many of these savages could be caught without a blow, for transmission as slaves to India, as they always come to us unarmed." A sore temptation, but it "requires more consideration and wiser judgment than ours alone." Still the situation was saved. Bartering went on steadily, and soon a considerable herd was secured. But anxiety was not yet over. We read on March 1: "To-day the last rations of bread were distributed." But now the ships were at hand, for on March 2, the very day after this last distribution of bread, we read: "Arrival of the ships 't *Hoff van Zeelandt* with the Vice-Admiral Junius on board, and the *Walwis*. And about noon also the *Malacca* and *Parel*, with the Admiral Gerard Demmer, Ordinary Councillor of India and late Governor of Amboina." And there is a ring of the pride of achievement in the next entry:—

Provided the ships with cattle, sheep, cabbages, carrots, milk, etc., and sent the Admiral in the galiot 10 sheep, some cabbages, carrots, and beet. . . . Each vessel to have per week three head of cattle and cabbages in proportion, and for the cabins four sheep, besides cabbages, carrots, beet, salad, etc., the Admiral's, however, to have six sheep and the Vice-Admiral's five sheep, etc.

And so the battle was fought and won.

## CHAPTER IX

### VAN RIEBECK—*continued*

FROM this time onwards there was a growing prosperity in the little settlement. There were indeed occasional blows—and heavy blows—as for example the loss of the company's herd of cattle in circumstances which I shall presently narrate to you ; but development and progress were none the less steady. The Commander laid his colony on sound foundations, and the building was strong and secure.

Van Riebeck's chief problem was the natives. And here the Commander followed the famous motto of the Company in all matters of native policy—"First to creep and then to go." To win their favour, "to draw them to us," as his own phrase goes, nothing was left undone that could be done. Not many pages of the diary pass without some reference to a "treat" to the natives—presents of tobacco, a "bellyful of rice," and "as much arrack or brandy as they could drink." There was no philanthropy in this matter. Here is a typical extract that explains the situation very well—"Gave them some tobacco. More bread, rice, and arrack should be at hand, as they draw the natives towards us, who continually say that the English gave them whole bags of bread, much tobacco, and whole cans filled with arrack and wine—we ought, therefore, to be better provided to outdo the English if we wish to draw the

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natives towards us, otherwise not an animal will be had, which may, if natives are humoured, cost so little that we could afford to add to the price some bread, tobacco, wine, or arrack." When we remember that the price given per head for cattle was ordinarily two copper plates, and for sheep "as much tobacco and wire as the sheep is long with the tail," we will realise that the shrewd Dutchman was not far out in his calculations. So the Hottentots were "drawn to us" with "the very strongest tobacco and brandy obtainable, and also with music and dancing," the Hottentots being very fond of music and firing of salutes, "in short, whatever might serve to draw them nearer and amuse them." Here is an idyllic picture of a pleasant Sunday afternoon at the fort with van Riebeck's native policy in full swing:—

After the sermon they were also treated with food and liquor, whilst a tub filled with a mixture of arrack and brandy was set open in the middle of the square within the fort, with a small sailor's cup in it, out of which they drank themselves so drunk that one beheld them making the strangest antics in the world, singing, dancing, leaping, and with other strange behaviour; at one time one, at another another, fell down through drunkenness, and were picked up by those not so far gone, carried outside the fort and laid on the grass to sleep.

Van Riebeck and his Dutchmen entered into the entertainment with spirit. On one occasion we hear of certain natives being "introduced into the Commander's own room and placed before a large mirror, at which they appeared to be completely at a loss, at one time thinking that the reflections were persons in another room, at another time recognising themselves and other persons; they believed that they were seeing spectres, so much so that Eva, Doman, and other Hottentots living near the fort had enough to do to explain matters to them. Thus we have often wonderful jokes and amusing oddities with these strangers." And we have a delightful account of the reception given to Sousoa,





Van Riebeck Entertains the Hottentots



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“chief of the Chainouquas,” who “entered the fort, riding on a large ox, accompanied by his son’s wife.” “He was treated to cheese, fresh bread and sugar in a tin dish, and seated on a mat in the Commander’s room with the aforesaid dirty princess (his son’s wife), a favour never shown to anyone before. We also played for him on the *claversingel*, all which appeared to please him immensely, as well as the beer, Spanish and French wines, which he relished exceedingly. However, he did not take so much as would have intoxicated him. His followers were entertained in the front hall with biscuits and brandy in such a way that they sang lustily, jumped and performed various monkey tricks.” Cannot we imagine the scene—the rudely-timbered room in the fort, hung with weapons and horns and other trophies of the chase, the chief and the “dirty princess” with their mantles of skins about them on the floor, and the jovial Dutchmen in their mid-seventeenth century dress pouring out the wine or strumming some rollicking tune on the *claversingel*, while *Vrouw van Riebeck* in white kerchief and stiff farthingale stands in the doorway looking on, with one half-frightened child in her arms and another hiding his head in her skirts.

The Hottentots of those days were not over-careful as to personal cleanliness. Indeed, as the Commander puts it, they were “grievously tormented if not allowed to wallow like swine in all kinds of filth,” and van Riebeck tells us ruefully that he spoiled a new suit of clothes in embracing one of them. Perhaps no greater proof of the Commander’s zeal for the Company could be given than such an embrace.

But van Riebeck had more methods of gaining influence over the natives than these genial entertainments. When he came to the Cape he set himself to study their tribal politics and profit by their divisions and jealousies. On the peninsula itself he found a wretched tribe, which he calls the Watermen, miserable

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Calibans who had no cattle and lived on the mussels of the rocks on the seashore and roots and herbs dug out of the ground. Besides these Caapmen or Watermen, there were other tribes, one behind the other receding into the interior, which were known to him by picturesque names of more or less doubtful authenticity—"the true Saldanhars" (Saldanha being the Portuguese captain who had given his name to this region), the Gorachouquas, or tobacco thieves, the Chainouquas, the Goringhaiquas, the Hesaquas, "regular Dagga-makers of the Hamcumquar," the Namaquas, and so forth. I need not go into their mutual relations, and the respective tracts of country over which they wandered with their herds. Sufficient it is to say that they all desired tobacco, copper, and arrack, that they were all more or less hostile to one another, and that van Riebeck skilfully used their greed and their hate to serve the interests of his Company. He had several Hottentot instruments from whom he learned all he could of native lore. There was Eva, the interpretress, for whom the Commander had a soft spot in his heart—though not for a moment do I suggest that there were the same picturesque relations between them as between Cortes and his famous interpretress Marina. Eva was aristocratically connected, her sister being married to a chief, and she seems to have been devoted to the Dutch, so that her information and influence were of great value. Then there was her uncle, Herry, a rascally Caapman, who had gone on a voyage to the East Indies in an English ship. "Herry," says van Riebeck, "likes the English better than he does us"—a characteristic of most natives who have tried both—"being always full of them—no doubt he has persuaded the natives to keep their cattle back until the arrival of the English, as he seems to know pretty exactly when their fleet will be here from India." Herry was by no means a faithful servant; his aim was to line his nest at the expense of the Company by making himself

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the sole intermediary between Dutch and natives, and his tricks in the pursuit of this policy soon led him into trouble. For van Riebeck was a true Dutchman, cleverer than any native at his own game. "Herry was also in the fort pretending that he had urged the natives now here to bring cattle; pretended we believed him"—one entry goes; and Herry, as I shall presently show, soon found himself laid by the heels and a prisoner in Robben Island, where Eva also was for a time (and behaved herself most scandalously). He was only brought to the mainland when his services were urgently required on some special mission. When, for example, the Commander was looking for certain cattle thieves, a resolution was passed that "Herry will therefore be brought over from the island and employed for the purpose, but well secured. Golden promises as big as mountains will be made to him, but none will be held binding"—a remark which may be regarded as typical of van Riebeck's code of political morality. Herry ultimately escaped in an old boat, and afterwards succeeded in getting into favour with the Dutch again, though he is reported as "trembling like a lap-dog owing to his bad conscience." Dominy was another creature of the Commander's. He was called "Dominy" because he was "such a very simple-minded man"; but in the end was found to be by no means so simple as he looked. He "tries to thwart the Company in everything," says the *Journal* at last, "and is thrice as bad as Herry ever was during his whole life." But between these three people, the visitors to the fort and the expeditions inland, van Riebeck contrived to learn much of the native and to get a great deal of influence over his affairs, so that at last he became known among the Hottentot tribes far and wide as "Lord of the Land," "who wishes to make friendship with all nations."

But before he reached this position he had to get many lessons from hard experience. The first, and in

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some respects the worst blow he received from the natives came down upon him like a thunderbolt, when he had only been eighteen months in the country. It happened on a Sunday—"while we were listening to the sermon." The Company's herd of cattle, forty-two in number, including all the milch-cows and draught oxen, were grazing in the charge of a herd-boy, when the Watermen swooped down, murdered the boy, and drove off the cattle. Herry seems to have been at the bottom of it, for during service he absconded with his family. Soldiers were despatched after the light-footed thieves, but in vain. The Dutchmen sank in the heavy sand of the Flats, just as Almeida's Portuguese had done more than a hundred years before, and the Hottentots and the cattle were soon over the hills and far away.

It was a terrible blow to van Riebeck. "We have lost the pantaloons—being unbreeched," he says in his diary—and by the Watermen too, whom he had kindly treated. "Besides, we have been cruelly deceived in our interpreter Herry, whom we had always maintained as the chief of the lot, who had always dined at our table as a friend of the house, and been dressed in Dutch clothes."

That in moral turpitude in this matter of cattle-stealing the Dutch were on much the same level as the Hottentots, may be seen anywhere in the diary, for van Riebeck is always sighing to be allowed to seize the natives' cattle and themselves as well, and only the commands of the Company and considerations of policy prevented him. But the fact remains that the Hottentots were the first actual transgressors, and this circumstance is made full use of by the Commander. A dozen schemes of revenge flit through his mind and are frankly set down in the *Journal*. "Suitable opportunity" is the burden of them all; but in the meantime the natives must be lulled into confidence again, so that they may be enticed into the trap. "If their cattle be

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taken they must be taken also, and removed. Can be easily got within the fort and made as drunk as pigs, the more so as their confidence in us is unlimited."

Then he has another plan to throw a chain of forts across the neck of the peninsula, get the Hottentots inside and keep them there, taking their cattle as required, and allowing a few of them out at a time to get more. But "first to creep and then to go." The Commander waited long for his "suitable opportunity." He waited five years, and during that time he loaded Herry with favours. He allowed him to steal copper on pretence of trading it for cattle on behalf of the Company; he allowed him to become a great man; he allowed him to grow rich in cattle; he allowed him to graze them near the fort; he allowed him to do anything he pleased.

Then at last came the "suitable opportunity." Herry was coaxed inside the fort and made prisoner. The sergeant and twenty men surrounded the cattle. The Hottentots resisted; but one of them was killed and another wounded and the herd brought into the kraal. Besides Herry, van Riebeck had secured a number of prisoners, and the Caapmen were now in his power. Then the Commander drew up a treaty with the tribe, and a perusal of it leaves us with a high opinion of his abilities. The first article is as follows: "Whatever the Caapmen have done to our injury, and whatever we did against them, including the shooting of the Hottentoo yesterday, in the fury of the encounter, shall be considered forgotten and forgiven, as if nothing of the whole had ever taken place, and the dead Hottentoo had never been in the world." The Caapmen were forbidden to cross the Salt River or the Liesbeeck, "as the pastures on this side are too small for us all." If they were attacked by other natives they might come under the shelter of the guns. The cattle of the natives were not to trespass on the cornlands of the Dutch. If

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any of the Company's slaves escaped, the Hottentots were to capture them and receive payment for them in copper. They were not to stop any other natives from coming to the fort to trade. They were to supply all vessels with a certain number of cattle and sheep for payment in copper, and they were to have the right of boarding the vessels to get bread and brandy. Thus van Riebeck had his "suitable revenge"; in return for the loss of forty cattle and a boy and some copper and tobacco, he had got 110 cattle, 260 sheep, three prisoners, a title to the lands of the peninsula, and a claim on a large percentage of the tribe's cattle in perpetuity. Besides this, as van Riebeck calculated, Herry still owed him f. 375; and "moreover"—so ends this settlement of accounts—"the murder of the boy is still open—an open question, and not yet forgotten."

It is characteristic of our good Commander that this delightful instrument was signed "after the sermon."

But the trouble with the natives was not yet over. The freemen were now extending their corn and pasture lands to such an extent that the Hottentots saw the best of their grazing ground taken from them. "First to creep and then to go." When they protested, van Riebeck sweetly replied that there was not enough for both. The natives began to make reprisals. Their raids made life on the frontier of the colony exceedingly precarious. They killed a burgher named Simon In't Velt, and a servant, and they kept the whole settlement in a constant state of alarm. But van Riebeck was again too much for them. He organised mounted parties who raided the native camps, destroyed their goods and killed them or took them prisoners. He built three block-houses on a line from the Devil's Peak to the shore, so as to cut off the settlement from the rest of the country, facetiously calling them "Kyk out," "Keert de Koe" and "Houd den Bule," which mean "Look out," "Guard the Cow" and "Hold the Bull." These



little forts were garrisoned and linked together by a broad thorn hedge, after the manner of the thorn hedges the commander had seen in the East. The natives were thoroughly beaten, and were at last fain to sue for peace. And now van Riebeck made his titles doubly sure.

Here is his account of the matter :—

This day peace was once more concluded with the captain and chief of the Kaapmen, Herry (who had escaped from Robben Island), and all the principal men and elders. Promises were made on both sides no longer to molest one another. However nothing was left of the stolen cattle that could be restored, but they promised on their part to do their best that as many as possible might be brought down from the interior by other tribes, and from time to time, though they firmly maintained their grievance that we had more and more taken of their lands for ourselves which had been their property for centuries and on which they had been accustomed to depasture their cattle, etc. They also asked whether they would be allowed to do the same thing if they came to Holland, and added that it would have mattered little if we had confined ourselves to the Fort, but that instead we were selecting the best land for ourselves, without asking them whether they liked it or not, or whether they were inconvenienced or not. They therefore urged it very pressinglly to be permitted once more to have free access to the same for the purpose mentioned. At first we replied that there was not enough grass there for their and our cattle. They answered, "Have we then no cause to prevent you from obtaining cattle, as having many you cover our pastures with them? And if you say the land is not big enough for us both, who ought then in justice to retire, the real owner or the foreign usurper?" They therefore adhered to their old right of natural ownership, and desired to be allowed at least to collect bitter almonds which were growing wild in large quantities in that neighbourhood, as well as to dig roots for their winter food. This likewise could not be permitted as they would find too many opportunities to injure the colonists, and because we shall require the bitter almonds this year for ourselves in order to plant them for the projected fence. These reasons were certainly not communicated to them, but as they steadfastly adhered to their claims it was at last necessary to tell them that they had now lost the land on account of the war, and therefore could make

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sure of nothing else than that they had lost it completely, the more so as they could not be induced to restore the stolen cattle, which they had taken from us unjustly and without any reason, that accordingly their country, having been fairly won by the sword in a defensive war, had fallen to us and that we intended to keep it.

“First to creep and then to go.” A little fort on the seashore, fair words and strong drink, a little herd of cattle, a bigger herd, a good cause of quarrel, and now the ancestral owners of the soil are not to be allowed even to dig roots in it for their winter food. It is the natural course of events. Prospero takes the island from Caliban — though even Caliban was allowed to “dig up pig nuts.” The higher pushes out the lower, the stronger the weaker. 'Tis thus the world goes round. Another hundred years and over the whole country where once their great herds of cattle had roamed, the Hottentots were mere landless serfs, slave labourers for their masters the Dutch.

But besides this intercourse with the natives, van Riebeck found other means of exploring his new country. Expedition after expedition struck out into the wild waste of mountain and valley, which lay ridge upon ridge, line upon line, between the coast and the great tableland which forms the interior of South Africa. The first of these adventures was a strange affair. It happened two or three months after van Riebeck's landing, when the men were on short rations and suffering bitterly from hard work, cold and wet. Two sailors and two soldiers, the chief of them Jan Blanx of Malines, the boatswain of the yacht, deserted during the night and were not heard of for eight days. They at last returned very footsore and hungry, and from their confessions it seems that Jan Blanx had “dreamed in the yacht of a mountain of gold and such like frivolous things.” He and Jan Jansz van Leyden had persuaded the two others to go with him, as he

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“understood navigation,” his intention apparently being to make for Mozambique, taking the mountain of gold on the road. They got twenty-four miles on their way; but as they had with them only four biscuits and some fish, hunger soon brought them to sore straits. They lived for a while on eggs, young birds, and mussels; they saw ostriches and had to dodge rhinoceroses, “which threatened to attack us.” But at last they got to a very high mountain which they tried in vain to climb, and so Jan Blanx and his party returned to the fort to be put in irons. The bo’sun’s diary, written with red chalk, “in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,” is a pathetic little document of exploration—the first into the interior of South Africa. “Alone” (it ends) “I could not proceed, so we decided to return, trusting to mercy in God’s name.” But van Riebeck was not inclined to mercy: there was too much discontent simmering among his men, and he thought it time to make an example. Jan van Leyden was indeed reprieved from sentence of death which was passed; instead, he was bound to a post and had a bullet fired over his head. Jan Blanx was keel-hauled and got 150 lashes. All four were condemned to work as slaves in irons for two years. Thus ended our first expedition, most unhappily for the explorers.<sup>1</sup>

But except for occasional voyages along the coast, or overland expeditions to Saldanha Bay, it was five years before any serious exploration was attempted. Then Abraham Gabbema was sent with an expedition to reach the “Saldanhars” and to open direct trade with them, the object being to get rid of Herry’s officious intervention between the Dutch and the tribes of the interior. Gabbema got as far as the Berg River, over seven leagues from the fort; but could not cross it, and so was forced to return. Next came the expedition

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<sup>1</sup> It is pleasant to note that the deserters were released from their irons a few months afterwards.

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under the gallant Sergeant Jan van Harwarden with fifteen men, two Hottentots, six pack oxen, and three weeks' provisions. In the words of the *Journal*, the sergeant and his men "found the pass over the mountain range of Africa, against which the Berg River is lying, and through a kloof of which it runs from the far inland. On the other side of the mountains they had found such a large flat that they believed they might travel more than a hundred leagues without reaching another mountain range. The flat seemed to be stony soil unfit for corn, there being hardly any grass for the oxen, and no natives found at a distance of 50 hours. Hence they had returned, especially also because their food was running short and some were sick."

It was an arduous journey. Once a rhinoceros ran through their cattle in its blind way, without doing any harm. They saw an elephant, wild horses (zebras), wolves, leopards, antelopes and elands. They saw lions, sometimes five or six in company. At night "the roaring of the lions was dreadful." Dysentery attacked the little band, and two of the explorers died, Gerrit Benkeren and another, the first martyrs of South African exploration. Once as they were camping on the banks of the Eerste River, while the sergeant was serving out the provisions, a large lion sprang upon one of the men, threw him down, and tore him grievously. The sergeant seized his gun, placed the muzzle against the forehead of the brute, and shot it dead. The skin was taken home and stuffed and placed in the large hall of the fort, where it long remained as a memorial of the sergeant's gallantry. We next hear of Harwarden, now ensign and member of the Council, making an expedition to the Cochoquas, a great tribe of the interior. The officer made himself very popular with Oedaso, the chief, playing the fiddle merrily as they sat round the camp-fire, "whilst a certain soldier made a lot of fun to the great amusement of all." The ensign,



A large Lion sprang upon one of the Men



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who had served in the States' army, afterwards told the Commander "that he had never before seen so many people living on so many encampments all on one spot, all full-grown powerful men, living in large round houses made of mats, 30 or 40 feet in diameter. Oedaso had three houses for himself, much larger even, and so full of assegais, arrows and bows as if they were armour rooms. His sleeping place was on a very fine mat in a hole in the ground. Like all the Hottentots he was dressed in skins, and so besmeared that the fat dripped down his body. This is their greatest pomp. Their cattle were in such numbers that the end could not be seen. . . . The sheep alone took three hours to leave their kraals, and the cattle not less. The latter were bigger than any oxen ever seen at home, and about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet broad on the back and the buttocks. They were also so high that he being a very tall person, could scarcely look over the backs of the animals, or reach them with the elbow."

Then came a more ambitious venture. Van Riebeck himself had been dreaming golden dreams. Eva and other natives had been telling him wonderful stories of a great native people that lived far inland. There was an emperor called Chobona, who ruled over all the Cape natives. He was rich in gold, which was taken out of the sand, and his people knew how to coin and stamp the coin, "which they made as big as, or even bigger than the palm of the hand." They had large houses of stone and beams; they sowed white rice and they planted all kinds of vegetables; they wore clothes and kept a standing army. Now what the foundation of these stories was I do not know. Perhaps they had none, perhaps they were a confused rumour, stolen across Africa, of the Arabs or Portuguese; perhaps they were a tradition of a great native people now extinct, who may have built the gigantic ruins of Zimbabwe, which remain to "tease us out of thought" with their weird

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mystery. I do not know; but at any rate these old wives' tales fired our Commander's imagination, and with them in his mind were jumbled up confused ideas of Portuguese Africa, drawn partly, no doubt, from soldiers and sailors, who had either been there or talked with men that had, partly from a wonderful chart upon which were marked fabulous towns and rivers according to the geographer's fancy. So an expedition was organised to go to the "land of the Monomotapers." It was to look for the "permanent towns of Monomotapa, Butua and Davugul, at and in the neighbourhood of the River Spirito Sancto." We have heard of this river before. You may see it in the old maps of Spanish America and East Africa; but here at anyrate it was the river of Romance, the Holy Spirit of Adventure, to lure men on after gold and knowledge till they should fall in the quest and their bones bleach in the wilderness. Jan Danckaert, a soldier of Nynoven, led the expedition, and a brave man he seems to have been, even though he did not reach the Monomotapa—who was, if van Riebeck had only known it, a thousand miles away, with a waste of mountain and desert karoo and savage wilderness between that no man could cross. Danckaert and his twelve men only got some sixty miles on the way, and even this gave them incredible toil. They made attempt after attempt to break through the great mountain ranges, which, one behind the other, bar the way into the interior. Now, in these pleasant valleys under the rocky precipices and in the sheltered kloofs where the waterfalls leap from height to height, you may see farms and vineyards, sheltered among oaks and gum-trees, or in a snow of orchard blossom—

Fair white homesteads there abide,  
Lustrous glimmering pearls ashine.

But in the days when Jan Danckaert broke his fingernails in trying to open the door of Africa, the rocks were peopled only by bushmen and baboons, and the



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valleys by rhinoceros and antelope. At a river which still bears the name of Elephant's River, Danckaert saw a herd of two or three hundred elephants, and among the cliffs he met bushmen who gave him honey out of their leathern bags or ran from him in fear. For days the men and oxen blundered through the high grass, followed the rhinoceros paths, stumbled in the molehills that riddled the ground, climbed the mountain passes. They were knocked over with dysentery. They became mutinous, and one of them threatened to shoot Danckaert when the leader ordered him to look after the cattle. "At this time," he writes in his diary, "I have not the mastery so as to keep the men in good order, so that I am obliged to put up with every insult, keep my tongue, and get them with kind words to proceed."

So they returned, and van Riebeck sent out another expedition. This time it was made up of thirteen men, led by Corporal Pieter Cruythoff, "master-builder of the Company." After toiling through many a valley and over many mountain ranges, "we saw level country. Between north and west we could see no more mountains." Everywhere were signs of old encampments, but it was not until evening that one of the Hottentots cried out in a voice of terror, "Meester Pieter, Namaqua."

And sure enough twenty-three tall natives were standing on the rocks above them, looking down at the party. They had great shields of oxhide, skins hung over their left arms, they had bows and arrows over their shoulders, and an assegai in each hand. Pieter soon made friends with these savages and was introduced to the king, "a man like a giant, much taller than Cattibou, the biggest slave of the Company." Pieter taught the king how to smoke tobacco, and gave him a sup of brandy—which pleased the monarch much. They were led into the camp, a town of round huts,

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where there were some seven hundred people and great herds of cattle and sheep. Then the king entertained his visitors.

“A triumph was blown,” Pieter tells us, and then “from one to two hundred people formed a circle, each had a hollow reed in his hand, some were long, some short, some thick, and some thin. One stood in the centre with a long stick and sang, the others blew on the reeds and danced around, performing fine actions with their feet. The women danced round the ring, and the sound was as if one heard trumpets blowing. The king sat on his chair a little distance off. This chair is a round piece of wood three or four fingers thick, beautifully ornamented with beads, and is generally carried with them wherever they go. This amusement lasted about two hours, and consisted of all sorts of dances. They then left off, and the king accompanied us to our camp, where he smoked a few pipes of tobacco. Darkness coming on he went back to his house. The blowing of trumpets then recommenced and lasted about three or four hours in the night, when they went to sleep.”

Thus Pieter was happily entertained by these hospitable Namaquas, who were great dandies in their way, in their “beautifully prepared skins of tigers, leopards and rock-rabbits, gorgeously ornamented with copper ornaments,” with locks “as long as those of a Dutchman” threaded with copper beads, their necks and their waists hung with copper and iron chains, metal rings round their arms, and plaited skins on their legs. Pieter left them with kindly salutations on both sides, and warm invitations to the Namaquas to visit the fort.

There were other expeditions which brought back tantalising but unsubstantial tales of “gold nations,” and pigmies, people who lived in houses, and the town of Vigite Magna.

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The last was disastrous. Near the Berg River the party saw an elephant which seemed to threaten an attack. To protect the cattle, the men bore down on the intruder with guns, and a battle royal ensued. In those days, one must remember, there were no explosive bullets and Express rifles, and a rogue elephant, which is counted dangerous even now, was then a very formidable enemy. In this case it charged one of the Dutchmen, named Pieter Roman, and so cruelly mangled him that he died two hours afterwards.

Worse still, when they reached the Namaqua encampment they found that the tribe had left, and their efforts to follow them brought the expedition into a dismal desert where they nearly died of thirst. "The ground there is as dry and barren as a plank and full of sandy molehills, without a green herb or grass, and only here and there a little pool of salt, muddy water, the sides of which were quite white with salt."

This was the end of van Riebeck's exploration. He had done a great deal, showing himself as zealous in this as in all other matters. But he had not found gold nor Vigite Magna, and the conclusion of the whole matter was, "All declare that nowhere a tithe has been found of such good land and water as are found here in this little corner of the Cape."

## CHAPTER X

### VAN RIEBECK—*concluded*

WHEN the Dutch came to the Cape the English were their chief rivals, and there were, of course, either as open or secret enemies, the Portuguese and the French. Van Riebeck, like a good Dutchman, detested them all, and was always ready to serve them a scurvy trick if he got the chance, taking care, however, to make friends with them when friendship seemed worth while. The great Italian, Machiavelli, who was not nearly so bad a man as he is usually painted, held that it is quite right, for the good of your country, to tell lies or cheat, or to circumvent your enemy in any manner possible. Van Riebeck was a disciple of Machiavelli. To show how he dealt with foreigners, let us take the case of the French sealer which was discovered at Saldanha Bay shortly after van Riebeck arrived at the Cape. The Frenchmen had collected nearly fifty thousand sealskins, besides blubber, before the Dutch galiot discovered them, and the French captain gleefully told his visitors that he "hoped to retire if he got home." When he heard all this, our good Commander immediately sent men overland to Saldanha Bay with letters which the French captain was asked to be so good as to deliver in Holland. He was also told that if he had touched at the Cape he would have been supplied with "sheep, cattle, fowls, geese, ducks, partridges, and all kinds of game, besides

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salad, cabbages, carrots, turnips, and all kinds of European garden produce, which we were also inclined to send him if we had had a vessel at our disposal." At the same time as these pleasant civilities were to be delivered, "you are to tempt as many of the Frenchmen as possible to desert, and as secretly as you can, that in this way the captain may become so helpless that he may be induced to sell his ship and cargo to the Company." We are glad to hear that this cheerful piece of scoundrelism did not succeed, as the captain grew suspicious, "trusting us as little as we trust him," and the Dutch were only able to get four Frenchmen who had been marooned on an island for insubordination.

That van Riebeck would have played the English the same trick if he dared is shown by entries in the Diary. Thus when an English ship called at the Cape and took water and fish without so much as asking by your leave, there is the following observation :—

The Dutch part of the Englishman's crew very unwilling. About thirty or forty of them would have liked to remain here, and we might easily have hidden them inland, but as our masters do not like to be in trouble with that nation, we did not dare to do so ; otherwise there would have been a chance of hampering the Englishman to such an extent that he would not have been able to move his ship, and been obliged to sell the whole concern to the Company for a trifle.

Van Riebeck, indeed, had a healthy fear of the English, and was very civil to them when he got the chance, "to show them the kind heart we have towards them without any hypocrisy." Thus on one occasion he "entertained the English officers at dinner ; treated them so well that at night they went on board pretty sweet and jolly and well pleased." And shortly after we have the entry : "English officers again dined with us, and at night they were as jolly as before, dancing, jumping, rolling, and happy when they left." Jack ashore is always the same, you see ; and he was not to

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be outdone in kindness. The captain offered the Dutchmen "anything which the ship might have," and when this large offer was refused, "sent the commander a hogshead of good English ale, a case of distilled waters, a good English cheese, and six smoked tongues." Van Riebeck, in his turn, "to be under no obligation, but rather to leave it on the other side," sent on board a large quantity of vegetables. Very pleasant, is it not? and yet, I make no doubt, they would have cut each other's throats with all the pleasure in the world.

But the Commander had cause to be careful. They were a desperate lot on the seas in those days. The French at Madagascar, for all their backing by Cardinal Mazarin, were little better than pirates. We hear how these gentry "went to the Red Sea to rob the Moors; there they had chased a vessel supposed to be a Moor, but found it to be English, and having sent their small bark and sloop against it, were beaten off with the loss of sixty men." Then we have an account of how a French vessel from Dieppe, with a Swedish commission, lay in the Dutch harbour of Cape Verde for two months, pretending to be a peaceful merchantman, while two Dutch flutes were taking in their cargoes. The Governor gave a dinner in honour of the departing vessels, and ten of the Frenchmen, "secretly armed with pistols under their clothes," were among the guests.

After dinner, when all stood up to drink a parting glass together, the Frenchmen seized the opportunity, and placing their pistols on the breasts of the Governor and some of his retinue, compelled them to surrender as prisoners, together with all who were in the fort and were unarmed or had no idea of evil. At the same time they made a signal to the men of their ships, who at once attacked the flutes, and after a successful plunder they departed, leaving the Governor in possession of his plundered fort, though no one was killed.

Part of the plunder taken by these buccaneers was three hundred thousand guilders in gold; and we need

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not be surprised when van Riebeck remarks, "This narrative made us more prudent towards these visitors, though we never trusted them."

Little wonder, too, if the Commander felt alarmed when the French ship *Marechal* was wrecked in the Bay, and a hundred and fifty desperate Frenchmen came swimming ashore on casks and planks and other wreckage. The new Governor of Madagascar—for already France claimed possession of that island—a Prussian named Gelton, was on board, as well as a bishop, Monseigneur Estienne. Van Riebeck demanded that all the arms be delivered up, at which very reasonable request the Prussian used most desperate threats. The Commander was firm, however, and soon brought them to terms, and the upshot was that a good many of the Frenchmen were taken into the Dutch service, while the officers were given quarters in the town tavern.

Those were troublous times, and van Riebeck had need to be careful. For example, we find him sending the following message to "the Admiral and Combined Council of the Return Fleet":—"This serves to inform you that the English have garrisoned Saint Helena, and that the Seventeen have sent written orders that the return fleet shall not touch there this year, because it is not certain whether, in consequence of the tottering Government in England, a stronger alliance or war with that country and our State will be the result." Thus we see the three great Powers had taken up their positions—the French at Madagascar, the Dutch at the Cape, the English at Saint Helena—points of vantage in the struggle for the East, and the reversion of the great Portuguese Empire. Each meant to have it, and the struggle was to rage for a hundred and fifty years before England came out victorious. In this great fight the Cape, as we shall see, was not the least important factor.

But in the meantime our Netherlanders were making

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themselves very snug ashore. For all van Riebeck's troubles and perplexities he had his consolations. His garden, we can see, was a perpetual delight to him. He gloats over his cabbages, his sweet potatoes, his parsnips, and his turnips. The first cauliflower grown at the Cape has a special entry to itself. "Everything at the table reared at the Cape," he says, with the true colonial pride; and again, "The horse-radishes grow well, glory be to God!" "The finest heads of lettuce in the world" is another of the entries. And then, later, we can see the joy he takes in his fruit trees grown from seed gathered east and west, his pisangs and pummeloes—his olive trees "doing well"—alas, that they have never since done well at the Cape—his oranges and lemons, medlars, quinces, and currants. "The first cherry grown at the Cape" appears as an entry. But I think the sweetest and most touching entry of all is, "This day the first Dutch rose was plucked at the Cape." I like to fancy that it was a Marie van Hout, that glorious and delicate bloom, pale cream with a flush of pink, and that the Commander himself pinned it over the snowy linen upon his wife's breast. Then we have another entry, almost as delightful: "To-day (Sunday), glory be to God, wine was pressed for the first time from the Cape grapes, and the new must fresh from the tub was tasted; it consisted mostly of Muscadel and other white round grapes, of fine flavour and taste."

Then van Riebeck rejoiced to see his woodcutters bringing down the mighty trees of the forest, and it is plain that lime-making and brick-burning, planning a fort, or building a house were keen delights to him. And he had great joy in his experiments with free settlers and their farms, though here he had many disappointments. He would go and watch the waving fields of corn, and he is in a bitter mood indeed when the south-easter blows the grain out of the head. Then



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a hedge to keep out the natives, or a canal to fill the moat, or a redoubt to protect the shore becomes an absorbing interest. And when a "tiger" breaks into the kraal and kills all his ducks and geese there is mourning and lamentation. As for the breeding of pigs, it becomes a passion with him, and we have a "resolution," a yard long, instructing the burghers in pig-rearing. Even rabbit-breeding is not too trifling an occupation, and there is a world of anxiety in the entry: "The last buck sent is worth nothing; he allows himself to be bitten by the others, who chase him about; the black buck is good, but he seems to have forgotten the does."

The scarcity of labour was a great trouble, then as now, and the Commander is constantly wishing for a few thousand Chinese to cultivate the soil. Then comes the *Hasselt* with a cargo of slaves from Popo, in the Gulf of Guinea—"a fine, strong, and healthy lot," says the Diary. They were very useful, and I do not suppose the Cape could ever have become what it is were it not for slave labour. But they were a great trouble also. In some cases, no doubt at all, they were cruelly treated, and they were a sullen, murderous lot, always plotting to escape or to murder their masters. The blacksmith was kept busy making chains for them; but still they escaped now and again, or wreaked dreadful vengeance upon their owners; and the most atrocious crimes ever committed in South Africa were the result of slavery. The geographical notions of these people seem to have been as crude as van Riebeck's own, and they thought that if they could only escape they could walk back to their homes in Angola. Cheerful people they were: "They further stated that they intended to live on Hottentoo flesh, whom they would kill here and there, as they were accustomed to do in their own country, where the victors ate the conquered."

But the Commander had trouble also with his own

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people. He was a stern disciplinarian, as I have shown, and he had need to be, for he had a rough lot to deal with. We already know how Jan Blanx and van Leyden were punished; but I did not say that a bo'sun, who was only suspected of sympathising with the deserters, was sentenced, as "a loose and dirty prater," to drop three times from the yard-arm, and receive "100 lashes on his wet posterior before the mast." We hear of others getting "fifty cuts on their dry skin"; but which was the worse form of punishment I leave those of my readers who are schoolboys or schoolmasters to determine. Van Riebeck kept good discipline, that is certain. Every one had to go to church on Sunday, and at meal times it was the duty of the gunner to go round and see that every one said grace. But sometimes a drunken and riotous crew on shore made terrible trouble, slashing about with knives and hangers, and firing their pieces, to the great danger of quiet folk.

Much more serious, however, than such drunken escapades was "the great treason" discovered by the surgeon, Mr. William Robertson, a native of Dundee: "During the examinations before the council it was revealed that four English, four Scots, three Dutch servants, besides two freemen's servants and fifteen slaves, whose intention was first to kill the seamen of the *Erasmus* working in the forest; after that the men at the 'Schoor'; and after that, to scale the fort and murder all in it, the smallest child included; after that to proceed to the yacht *Erasmus* in the boats of the Company or the freemen, to seize her, and depart in her. But the Almighty be thanked, who had been pleased to prevent this murderous conspiracy."

The nationality of these conspirators, who were duly punished and sent to Batavia, shows what a very mixed lot the servants of the Company were. To say that the colony was composed of Dutchmen is impossible after reading the Diary. Some were Dutch, but a great

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many were Germans; and there was, besides, a large sprinkling of English, Scots, and Swedes. The Company picked up its men where it could, and the Cape has always been cosmopolitan.

Besides these troubles, great and small, there was usually the excitement of wild beasts to keep the settlement lively. Sometimes it would be a leopard in the fowl-house, sometimes a lion in the cattle kraal. It was no joke to kill a lion in those days, and many a terrible fight at close quarters is recorded in the Diary. Here is one which must stand for all the rest:—

During the forenoon the Commander saw many marks of wild beasts in the garden, and a little later, about fifty yards off, a lion jumped up and proceeded slowly towards Table Mountain. The sergeant, hunters, and others were sent to kill him, and at once they were followed by about 200 Hottentoots, with all their sheep and cattle driven before them. At the foot of Table Mountain the beast was so thoroughly enclosed in a deep kloof that he could only escape through the flock of sheep, which the Hottentoots intended to be a defence. The lion was lying under a bush, and they remained between their sheep and cattle. When the lion showed itself, and, roaring, wished to break through or seize a sheep, they rushed forward with their assegays over the sheep, making a great noise; the lion then retired, looking round very thoughtfully, but as the Hottentoots could not very well reach him, the sergeant (the hunters and others being about ten yards away from the beast) fired but missed; the hunters, however, sent three bullets through its head, so that it fell down dead at once. Then the Hottentoots became valiant, and tried to give the animal a hundred stabs after death, but they were prevented from doing so in order not to spoil the skin, that, properly prepared, might be hung up in the large hall used for a church.

But I must resist the temptation to quote further, though there is much else that is interesting in this Diary of our first true South African colonists. The whole life of the settlement appears to us, not dimly but quite clear, with detail as precise as you may see in an old Dutch picture, where every thread of the lace on ruff and sleeve is painted in. We see van

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Riebeck at his work, directing, praising, blaming, bullying; the woodcutters in the forest; the brickmakers at the kiln; the ensign and his soldiers, sudden and quick in quarrel; a bos'un and his mates from the return fleet with news of the siege of Goa, or the doings of the French pirates; a brace of English sailors rolling along "sweet and jolly" from the Staats Herberg, where they have had a trifle too much bomboe; there are the Company's two hunters drunk as usual, and boasting of the lion or rhinoceros last shot; a fisherman comes up laden with snoek from the jetty the Commander has just built with such pains and trouble; and there is Frederick Boom, the Company's head gardener, a solid man, already well-to-do, and looking forward to a farm of his own. He is walking along with Louwys Rickart, who is a "great pastry-cook, roaster, and cook," and has just been allowed to set up for himself as a baker. And there, sure enough, is Mynheer Mostert, the miller, whose water-mill is click-clacking away farther up the stream. They'll all sit down on the Fiscal's stoep presently and have a glass of wine with him, and smoke a pipe of tobacco, and discuss the latest news from Batavia or Amsterdam. And now along the little street beside the canal comes Vrouw van Riebeck herself, with her little girl trotting beside her, and Abraham, one of the first of the Cape-born, in her arms. He is to be a great man, Abraham, one day,—no less than Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies,—greater than his father, who never became anything higher than secretary of the Council at Batavia. But now, look, there is a fleet of great Indiamen coming into the bay; they make a grand show as they sweep in with a flourish of trumpets and a resounding salute. Yet may be there will be hardly enough men to lower the great sails, and the good Commander makes haste to send them boatload upon boatload of fresh meat and green vegetables, for this is his chief end—the chief end of the town—to be

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the tavern of the Indian seas. He was a good man, our Commander, for all his fiery temper and manifold deceits, and he did a great work ; few men could have done it so well. He founded Cape Colony, its gardens, its houses, its farms, its industries—all had their start in him. As Mr. John Runcie, the poet of South Africa, has sung—

Yet here the tale beginneth, whatever pride may be  
In affluent power and traffic from war and victory,—  
With the keen-eyed Little Thornback stepping shoreward from  
the sea.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE HOUSE OF VAN DER STEL

AFTER twelve years' rule at the Cape Jan van Riebeck left it, as I have shown in my last chapter, an established colony—a flourishing little baby country. The good Commander went to Batavia where he became secretary to the Council of State, an honourable post, which must have suited the Commander very well. His son Abraham, who was born at the Cape, became in time a very great Company's man, no less a person, indeed, than Governor-General of the Indies—the first in the line of our great South Africans. We see him in his portrait somewhat puffed and liverish, as if he were fond of curry and good living; but a man of authority—and no doubt, like his father, a capable, energetic administrator.

But the van Riebecks concern us no longer. We must pass on, and that rapidly. After van Riebeck came a succession of commanders whose names it is needless to mention. They were busily engaged, like van Riebeck, in provisioning the ships, in writing to the Seventeen, in settling quarrels among colonists and sailors, in bartering cattle and fighting the Hottentots. Sometimes there were bigger matters on hand. The French and the English were fighting for their share of the India trade. The French seized Madagascar as a half-way house, the English St. Helena, and some-

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times the Dutch were fighting the one and sometimes the other. We need not trouble about all these little wars, though they caused a great deal of alarm to the Cape commanders at the time. Van Riebeck's fort was thought too weak, and a great stone fortress in the shape of a pentagon was built upon the beach, where it still stands, with the roar of the railway train under its walls on one side and the busy traffic of the street on the other. Nor need I trouble you in detail with the Dutch attack on St. Helena—not a very heroic business. An expedition was sent from the Cape with some three hundred men or more, who surprised and took the English fort. The English fled in a ship and fell in with an English squadron under Commodore Munden, who not only took the place back again, with its Dutch garrison, but surprised and captured the Dutch reinforcements.

All this and much more I must leave alone, and come at once to the great period of the Cape under Dutch rule—the reign of the House of van der Stel. It is a story so moving and tragical that I do not know of any other in our whole history of greater interest; and it displays in its different phases most of the great problems over which South Africans have been fighting ever since.

Simon van der Stel was a colonist and a Company man. He was the son of Adriaan van der Stel, the Company's commander at Mauritius; but he went to school at Amsterdam, then the greatest port of all the world, and we may be sure, he wandered—

Among her water meadows and her docks,  
Whose floating populace of ships—  
Gallies and luggers, light-heeled brigantines,  
Bluff barques and rake-hell fore-and-afters—brought  
To her very doorsteps and geraniums  
The scents of the World's End.

There he saw bales of pepper and spices and talked

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with tawny sailormen about Mauritius and the pirates and the sea-fights in the Indian seas. There he grew to manhood, and there married a great lady, Johanna Jacoba Six, one of the family that bought Rembrandt's pictures, and thus allied himself to the Sixes and the Tulps, merchant princes of his city. There he first served the East India Company, and there in due course he received the post of Commander at the Cape. Eighteen years he governed the Colony, first as Commander and then as Governor, and when he retired on the last year of the seventeenth century, his eldest son, Wilhem Adriaan, stepped into his shoes.

Simon van der Stel was, I think, a much bigger man than Jan van Riebeck. Indeed he might be placed with the greatest of South Africans, with Sir George Grey and Sir Bartle Frere and Cecil Rhodes himself. To begin with, he was a fine gentleman. He would never have descended to the shabby little tricks that van Riebeck was ready to play for the good of the Company. He was a father to the natives in the real sense of the word, protecting them against themselves and the cruelty and greed of the settlers. He planted oaks and built homesteads; he settled colonists; he encouraged agriculture; he explored the coast and the interior; he administered justice; he exercised hospitality—and all that he did bears the mark of the great man and the man of honour working in truth and justice and zeal for his country and mankind.

All this we see in a hundred different ways. Not a traveller visits the Cape but speaks of him with respect and enthusiasm. The account of him I like best is that of the learned Jesuit, Père Tachard, who visited the Cape four times in his journeys to Siam and Indo-China,—for even at that time France had begun to build up her great Empire in the East, and was sending out soldiers and sailors, statesmen and priests in the Imperial cause. When Père Tachard first arrived with his five



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brother Jesuits he found at the Cape the Baron de St. Martin, a Frenchman in the Dutch service, who was Major-General of Batavia, the great Hendrik Adriaan van Rheede Tot Drakenstein, Lord of Mydrecht, who had been appointed by the Company as Commissioner, with great powers to inspect and set right all their affairs in the East, and Commander van der Stel. Van Rheede and van der Stel were close friends, and they vied with each other in their kindness to the Fathers. First they entertained them to tea at the castle, talking of a thousand things, and then, finding that the Jesuits were anxious to make astronomical observations, van der Stel put at their disposal a lovely little pavilion in the Company's garden, a building which, as the Father says with enthusiasm, might have been built for the very purpose. The visitors were lost in admiration of the solid building of the fort, with its great hall, hung with trophies of the chase; its beautiful terrace, paved with great blocks of freestone; and its balconies with balustrades of iron. And then, when the Commander showed them the garden, they were surprised, as Père Tachard says, to find it "one of the most beautiful and curious I had ever seen in a country which appeared the most sterile and most frightful in the world." According to the Father it was some fourteen hundred yards long, and two hundred and thirty-five broad. "Its beauty does not consist, as in France, of compartments and parterres of flowers; there were no fountains, though it might have had them if the Company had gone to the expense. For there was a stream of living water which descended from the mountain and traversed the garden. But you saw there alleys as far as the eye could go, of citrons, pomegranates, oranges, protected from the wind by high and thick hedges of a kind of laurel, called 'spek,' always green and something like filaria. The garden is divided by these alleys into several plots, of which some are full of apples, pears, coigniers and apricot trees

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and the other excellent fruits of Europe; and in others you see ananas, bananas, and the rarest fruits of all parts of the world, transported here and cultivated with much care. Other plots are sown with roots, vegetables, and herbs, and others still with flowers the most esteemed in Europe, besides unknown blooms of beauty and odour the most rare." At the gate was the great slave lodge for five hundred slaves, many of whom worked in the garden, and in the middle of the garden wall on the side near the fort was the delightful little brick pavilion with its terraces and balustrades in which the good Fathers took their observations. It was a pleasant stay; a great number of Roman Catholic colonists, free and slave, French, German, Portuguese, Spanish, and Flemish, crowded to get the blessing of the priests, and Monsieur le Gouverneur was indefatigable in his courtesies, showing them, among other things, a bowl of gold-fish in which he took delight. In parting he embraced them, "praying God that the designs on which you go to China will end happily, and that you will lead a great number of infidels to the knowledge of the true God." And when they went on board they found a present of tea and Canary wine waiting for them in return for the microscope and burning glass which they had given him. Van Rhee de and van der Stel were both interested in science, and the Jesuits met a M. Claudius, a young doctor of Breslau in Silesia, who was preparing a Hortus Africanus for van Rhee de similar to that nobleman's great Hortus Malabaricus, which is still so much esteemed. Then, when Père Tachard arrived on his second voyage, the Governor treated him as an old friend. "Il nous fit mille amitez." There were then fifteen Jesuits, and van der Stel placed at their disposal a beautiful house in the country, which may have been Constantia itself. They could not accept it; but when one of their number was ill they accepted the services of the Company's doctor, and van der Stel helped them

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with their astronomical and tidal observations, and showed them rare plants gathered by himself in the interior. Altogether, we could not have a pleasanter picture of courteous hospitality; and let us remember, too, that it needed some courage and more breadth of mind for a Dutchman to show kindness to men who were French and Roman Catholic, and not only so, but members of an order associated in the vulgar mind with everything that was Satanic. As a matter of fact van der Stel was severely rated by the Directors for his kindness to the French, and had to defend himself against ridiculous charges because he accepted a miniature of Louis XIV. presented by a French officer to show His Majesty's gratitude. Van der Stel had a shrewd eye for men, and no doubt saw that the Jesuits were what they pretended to be—devotees of knowledge—men after his own heart. How he treated men whom he saw were not what they pretended to be we gather from the work of Peter Kolbe, a mountebank who came to the Cape on a scientific mission, and afterwards wrote a book which is chiefly composed of lies where it is not the work of other men. Van der Stel, he says, "took an infinite pleasure in imposing all the fictions and sotteries he could upon every one. Having the honour, forsooth, to be once in his company at his seat of Constantia, he took it into his head to assure me very gravely that in a journey from the Cape to Monomotapa, he reached at the distance of two hundred miles a very high mountain; where passing the night he ascended to the top, and discovered from thence very plainly that the moon was not so far from the earth as the astronomers asserted. 'For as that planet,' he said, 'passed over my head, the night being very still and clear, I could plainly perceive the grass to wave to and fro, and the noise of its motion in my ears.' 'You set up for an astronomer and a philosopher,' said he, 'what think you of this matter?' 'Think, sir,' I

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replied, seeing him very grave and knowing his temper, 'I think that your Excellency's eyes and ears are as good as most people's, and that it would be very ill manners for me to dispute the evidence.' And so the matter dropped."

Such a story makes us love the old man in spite of the author, and there are few who write of van der Stel without enthusiasm. Francois Leguat speaks of his kindness and his courtesy both to himself and to his fellow-Huguenots, and Captain Ovington cannot say too much of him. He describes the garden as "the Paradise of the world, the loveliest regions ever seen"; praises the way in which water is conveyed in narrow channels from the mountain to the shore, and in lead pipes forty feet out to sea, so that the ships' long boats could take it in without any labour; admires the curiously pruned trees, the exactness of the trimmed hedges, and the neatness and cleanness of everything, so that "even in the winter season scarce a leaf is seen upon the ground." And of van der Stel he says that he is a "very kind and knowing person, is maintained in grandeur, and lives honourably." His public table "wants no plenty either of European or African wines or Asian liquors," and groans with its variety of good things, "served in his bountiful entertainments on dishes and plates of massy silver." Before the departure of the fleets, he continues, the Dutch commanders are invited to a public repast, "where they drink and revel, bouze and break glasses as they please, for these frolics are the very life of the skippers."

Then we see another side of his character, equally pleasant, in his dealings with the French and Dutch settlers. When he was new to the country he explored the lovely valley of the Eerste River. Nowadays the sparkling little river is alive with rainbow and Loch Leven trout, and winds through rich vineyards and pleasant orchards of peach and apricot trees, past old

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white homesteads buried in oak and fig and eucalyptus. In those days it was full of primeval forest and reedy swamp, the haunt of the lion and the rhinoceros. Here van der Stel pitched his tent under the trees of a pleasant plot of ground surrounded by two branches of the river, and such dreams must have entered his head as came into the mind of Rhodes when he gazed from the Matoppos over the vaster wilderness of Matabeleland. Here was a country fit for white people, who would make of the wild valley among its savage mountains a little Rhine-land of the south. So the country of the Eerste was called Stellenbosch, the wood of van der Stel, just as the country of the Zambesi was called Rhodesia. And the Commander induced families of white settlers, now a little crowded in the confines of the Cape Peninsula, to seek a new home and cultivate the rich virgin soil of the valley. Year after year, van der Stel watched the growth of the settlement with the same solicitude that Rhodes showed towards Rhodesia. He got the settlers church and school, pastor and schoolmaster, and every year he spent his birthday in the growing village; and we have a pleasant picture of him examining the children in their tasks, and giving to each a cake varying in size according to the merit of the pupil.

Now, a little before this time, that great measure of persecution, the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, had been passed against the Huguenots of France, and these refugees crowded into Holland, where they were treated with a worthy hospitality by their Dutch fellow Protestants. But as their numbers increased, they could not but be something of an encumbrance in narrow little Holland, and they were anxious to find a wider home beyond the seas. So an arrangement was made with the Dutch East India Company, and van der Stel was asked to receive "some French refugees from Piedmont . . . all of the reformed religion . . .

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among them you will find men skilled in the husbandry of the vine, and some who understand the making of brandy and vinegar, whereby we anticipate that you will find the want of which you complain in this respect satisfied. It will be your duty, as these people are destitute of everything, to render them every assistance on their arrival until they are settled and can earn their own livelihood. They are industrious people and easily contented." Van der Stel was delighted; he replied with enthusiasm: "If they behave themselves," he said, "as piously and industriously as their fellow-countrymen who have settled here lately, they will benefit and strengthen the country in a wonderful degree, and excite much emulation among the Netherlanders." And so they arrived, the first of them by the *Vorschooten*, which deserves to be remembered as the *Mayflower* of South Africa, and by many other ships, until there were about two hundred of them in the new land.

And now van der Stel had to show what a statesman he was. The Cape was then but a little settlement, with a population in all of but a few hundred whites. Besides, France was usually at war with the Netherlands, and the Huguenots were sometimes not above the suspicion of intriguing with their mother country. They were, besides, not quite the meek saints that some people would have us suppose them to be, but often narrow and pugnacious fanatics. Montaigne remarks in one of his essays that there are just as dark and savage passions on the right side as on the wrong. Whether Calvinism was right or wrong is nothing to my purpose. All I venture to say is that it produced a very stiff-necked generation. But above all, these people were French and not Dutch, and it was the object of van der Stel to make a Dutch and not a French South Africa. His methods have been called harsh; but as far as I can see there is not a tittle of

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evidence in support of this view. On the contrary, he treated the French with all the courtesy and kindness characteristic of his nature. He gave them land without encumbrances, he gave them agricultural implements, he helped them himself with labour and wood, and he got the Dutch farmers to lend them their wagons. Then he wrote to Batavia: "The French fugitives sent hither from the fatherland, and established here, will, in consequence of their extreme poverty, be unable to enjoy any fruits of their labours in these wild and desert lands for three or four years to come. In the meanwhile they must be supported by the Company, and assisted from the slender resources of our poor-fund. Already the account for articles supplied them since their arrival has been considerable, and in order to relieve the Company from the burden as much as possible for the future, and assist those people in the most suitable manner, we request your Right Honourables, most humbly, that you may be pleased to allow that for their support and assistance, and likewise for those who are still to come, a collection may be made at Batavia, for which they will at all times be grateful, and we likewise shall feel personally obliged." Now it happened that the Dutch had been compelled by a Chinese pirate to evacuate the island of Formosa, and the poor-fund of that settlement was lying unappropriated in their coffers at Batavia. Perhaps the van Riebecks had something to do with it, but at any rate the whole sum—no less than six thousand rix-dollars—was sent to van der Stel and by him distributed among the Huguenots, as well as a large number of oxen obtained by barter from the Hottentots. When therefore, the Governor wrote to the Chamber, "we shall lend a helping hand to the French fugitives and give them proofs of Christian love, by putting them on their legs," he was saying no more than the truth.

But we have independent testimony of his kindness.

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The Marquis Henri du Quesne, himself a Huguenot exile, devised a scheme for placing a colony of the refugees on the beautiful island of Mascarenhas or Bourbon, now called Reunion, one of those glorious emeralds of coral and palm with which the Indian Ocean is studded. It was to be called the Isle of Eden, and was to be governed in a way that anticipated Rousseau's philosophy. The scheme ended in smoke, but it got so far that a private ship, the *Hirondelle*, was sent to spy out the land, and nine Huguenots, the famous François Leguat among them, were landed, not indeed on the island of Bourbon, but on that of Rodriguez. There they lived two years "the people and its rulers," as they say, "in the right haven of blessedness," and might have continued there to the end of their days if they had not been "goaded" by their longing for what they called "the most adorable sex" to build a boat and set out on a voyage in search of wives, true Frenchmen that they were. One of them died in this perilous enterprise, but the rest, after almost incredible perils, arrived at the island of Mauritius, then in the hands of the Dutch, and under the general supervision of the Cape Government. The boat was destroyed, whether by the French or the Dutch is a matter of dispute, the French were accused of trying to steal one of the Dutch boats, and there was soon a furious quarrel with the Dutch commander, that "cruel hangman Deodati" as Leguat calls him. The end of the wife-hunt was that some of the French were imprisoned on the island, and others marooned on a desert rock, near the mouth of the harbour. Into the merits of the quarrel I need not enter; but it may be said in passing, that the learned editor of Leguat in the Hakluyt series, does not seem to have read Deodati's defence in the Cape Archives. Leguat and his friends were afterwards sent to Batavia, and then went home by way of the Cape. This little



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story to show that Leguat, being a French Huguenot, and not too favourably disposed towards the Dutch, may fairly be regarded as an independent witness, while it is now generally admitted that he was an acute and faithful observer.

“Every one,” Leguat says, “must easily conceive that there are no beginnings without difficulties, and our honest countrymen did not meet with a few at first; but then they were charitably relieved, as I have already observed, and at length God was pleased so to bless their labours that they are at present perfectly at ease, nay, some of them are become very rich. In some parts of the Cape the landskips are wonderful fine, especially where our new inhabitants were settled, and the air is admirably good. Fine and large rivulets contribute to the fertility of the soil, which furnishes wine in abundance with all sorts of corn. The little hills are covered with vines, exposed to the best sun and sheltered from the bad winds. Spring water flows at the foot of these hills, and waters in its course the gardens and orchards, which are filled with all sorts of fruits, herbs and pulse, as well European as Indian. All this considered, 'tis certain the Cape is an extraordinary refuge for the French Protestants. They there peaceably enjoy their happiness, and live in good correspondence with the Hollanders who, as every one knows, are of a frank and down-right humour.” Again he says that the French colonists have “nothing to complain of.” “The Company maintains a minister and reader for them and affords them every day some fresh tokens of their respect.” And he goes on to speak in detail of the way in which they were treated, getting land for nothing, money from Batavia, husbandry tools, victuals and clothes, and provisions at reasonable prices.

All this van der Stel did out of the goodness of his heart, but at the same time he took such measures

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as were prudent in the circumstances. He planted Frenchmen and Dutchmen in alternate farms, where it could be done, and placed them as far from the seaport as possible. He allowed them their French minister, the Rev. Pierre Simond, but he refused to allow them independent government of their own church, preferring to leaven it with a Dutch element; and for teachers gave them not Frenchmen, but Dutchmen who knew the French language. In carrying out this policy, reasonable as it seems, he earned the hostility of some of the fanatics among the refugees. Pierre Simond, a learned ecclesiastic, who spent his spare time in improving the psalms of Marot and Beza, was a particularly troublesome gentleman, and when he was not quarrelling with van der Stel, was fighting with his neighbour and fellow Huguenot, Jacques de Savoie. Between Jacques and Pierre there was not much to choose, for of Jacques we find the Directors writing that "his nature can only be effectively altered and improved by time, kind intercourse and treatment." What they quarrelled about is not very clear. Van der Stel puts it down to "sheer obstinacy," and says that it was upsetting every one in the busiest season of the year. No doubt it was on some vexed point of theology or church government, for we find van der Stel saying: "We tried to settle their differences, and reconcile them with each other. For that purpose we called together the Great Church Council, in which the Rev. Leonardus Terwold presided. Moreover, three other ministers were called in, who were on board two ships in the Bay, but all in vain, for both being stubborn neither would give way to the other." Strange to think of those dry and acrid theological controversies raging anew between sour-faced sectaries in gown and bands on the southernmost point of Africa.

It is not easy to understand the difficulty of van der Stel's position unless it is kept in mind that neither the

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garrison nor the settlers could be properly called Dutch. Many were Roman Catholics, as we have seen; and many were Germans, French, Swedish, and English. They were not devoted to the flag of the Netherlands and were mercenaries at heart. Van der Stel complains that he has a garrison of only eighty men in the Castle, twenty of whom are engaged in collecting fuel—and of these many would be sick sailors left by the ships. He had to be wary as well as courteous: any sedition in the colony might imperil its existence—and he was always liable to be attacked by the French ships, which in fact intended to attack him. Once the French fleet put in for refreshment and wanted to land three hundred sick at once. The Governor would not allow it, courteously asking M. de Vaudricourt “de se mettre à sa place,” and would only permit sixty to be landed at a time. It was only on the supplication of his friends the Jesuits that he relented, “only praying the officers not to suffer anyone to abuse his honesty”; but for this concession he got into serious trouble with the Directors.

But when occasion demanded, van der Stel could be prompt and firm enough. After the war broke out between the Netherlands and France, two French ships, not yet aware of hostilities, put into Table Bay. The story of their capture by van der Stel is told in a rare old French book,<sup>1</sup> by a sailor who went to India with young du Quesne, and who had the story, as he tells us, from an armourer who was there:

“The *Coche* was commanded by a very brave and

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<sup>1</sup> My friend, the Rev. H. C. V. Leibbrandt, the learned keeper of the Cape Archives, mentions it in his delightful book, *Rambles Through the Archives*, as one of the books he was unable to obtain. It is, however, in the British Museum, *Journal of a Voyage of Mr. du Quesne* (Abraham du Quesne-Guiton, a nephew of the great admiral). The author is said to be M. Gregoire de Challes of Paris, who was a devout Roman Catholic and hated the Reformed Church and the English. It is a spritely book enough; but disgusting in parts, especially the account of the Cape, and I do not know that it is much to be trusted.

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resolute man called Armagnan, a native of Saint Malo. He was returning from India and did not know that war had been declared between France and the States. By misfortune he had on board four Jesuit mathematicians who were anxious to make some observations of longitude. Poor Mr. d'Armagnan had presentiments of that which awaited him. But one cannot conquer one's star! They reassured him and menaced him with the indignation of their society and by consequence with that of the King and Madame de Maintenon, if he should refuse them what they asked. (Here follows a savage attack on the Jesuits, whom the author—though a Catholic—hates.) The *Maligne* (the *Normande* is the name usually given to this vessel) went before and he followed a little way behind. He entered, seeing nothing to arouse his suspicions. The *Maligne* was displaying the French flag and he saw no evil, until he discovered three vessels in movement to take him flanks and rear. He saw it was impossible to defend himself, and desiring to perish and to set fire to the powder he entered the *sainte-barbe* pistol in hand. As he was raising the lid of the powder-magazine a scoundrel of a gunner who saw his design gave him a blow in the back with his partisan which pierced his heart and killed him. The pistol went off, and at the moment the Dutch entered and seized the vessel, which was loaded with merchandise to the value of from two to three millions."

The Dutch—somewhat ungratefully—allowed Mr. Armagnan's fellow-officers to hang the gunner; but a little later van der Stel must have felt inclined to hang the lot, for he discovered a conspiracy between them and one of his own soldiers (a Frenchman) to seize the Castle and the whole settlement, which, the conspirator said significantly, would offer less resistance than was thought.

But more serious quarrels than these were brewing

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with the settlers. If you read the Archives of the Colony you will see trouble hatching from the very beginning. It was not only that some of the settlers were the very scum of the earth (drawn into the Company's service from the low spunging-houses of the European seaports), who would have given trouble in any country; but there were points in the Company's colonial system that were bound to give trouble with free settlers. The Government wanted to keep the barter with the natives in their own hands, as was right and proper, for private barter always led to fighting between white and black. The white man robbed the native and the native in return robbed the white man. Then the Company wanted a steady supply of cheap meat and provisions for the ships, and the settlers wanted to sell at high prices. The Government derived a large part of their revenue from the sale of a wine and brandy monopoly, and this led to smuggling and more trouble. Some historians blame the Government. For my part, I do not see what else the Government could have done.

Be that as it may, the troubles which began with van Riebeck had reached a dangerous pitch by the time of Simon van der Stel, and, as we shall see in our next chapter, led to a revolution in the time of his son.

And at the risk of wearying my readers, let me just add that the Company must not be confused with the Cape Government. The Government on the spot knew what was going on, and to preserve peace and protect the natives often had to take measures of which the Company in Holland, not understanding the position, disapproved. To this day we have the same trouble cropping up now and again in our own Empire, when clever people who sit in their arm-chairs at home refuse to trust the man on the spot.

In this case the Company wanted to give up the

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cattle-trade and allow the settlers to barter with the natives; but the Governor took the other view, and sometimes was forced into disregarding their wishes.

There were a pack of vagabonds, some of them French refugees, and one of them a so-called Polish nobleman named Jean du Seine, who were up to all kinds of mischief. Van der Stel says of them that "in order to lead a lazy and indolent life, under the cloak of being zealous members and supporters of the Protestant Faith, they had obtained a passage to the Cape in the Company's ships." (Here van der Stel adds that he casts no reflection on the good Huguenots.) "But these others," he continues, "had taken no trouble to find a living or attend to farming, and did not fulfil the expectations of the Company." Among them were the murderers of Corporal Jacob Cloete. They lived in the mountains like brigands, with a price upon their heads, and made a living by bartering or stealing cattle from the natives and selling them to the settlers. They even pretended they were the Company's servants, with the result that the Hottentots became angry and distrustful. Van der Stel tried his best to capture the scoundrels, but the settlers concealed them because they wanted cheap cattle. The natives began to take revenge, and poor van der Stel had endless trouble with them; while on the other side the Directors blamed him for forbidding the cattle traffic.

But for the end of this great three-cornered quarrel between settlers, Company, and Governor, we must wait until the next chapter. Let us first finish with Simon van der Stel. We see the man he was in a hundred different ways. We see him sending expedition after expedition to explore the interior; but more we see him, himself an explorer, penetrating far into Namaqualand, winning from the Namaquas the great secret of the Orange River, which van der Stel was the first to place upon the map of Africa, and



Simon Van der Stel and the Rhinoceros





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bringing back with him a sample of the copper ore which would one day become an important source of colonial wealth. It was a great achievement this journey, and van der Stel and his devotion to knowledge may be measured by the pains he took to make his exploration successful. Think of it! The Governor sets out with fifteen wagons, eight oxen in each, eight carts, and his own coach. He takes with him a hundred spare oxen, besides twenty horses and mules, and a boat for crossing the rivers. He has besides over a hundred followers, sixty of them Europeans, and to inspire respect among the natives two small cannon form part of the train. Thus equipped he passes north over mountain range and river valley, travelling slowly but surely, week after week, month after month. The party lived on the flesh of the hippopotamus and the eland that then roamed over country which now supports vineyards and cattle farms. Sometimes they come on a herd of elephants, sometimes on a tribe of bushmen hunting buck with their poisoned arrows. Once a rhinoceros charges the Governor's carriage. He jumps out and the beast makes for him; but is turned aside by a bullet, and charges on in the blind, furious way rhinoceroses usually charge, heedless of the hail of musket-balls that follows him. Always north until the rich mountain valley region comes to an end, and the party enters a country desolate indeed, the parched rocks and sand and aloe bushes of Namaqualand. The water grows salt so that neither man nor beast can drink it; the native guides are sulky and want to turn back. Yet van der Stel presses on, in the drought and heat of midsummer, and refuses to go back until he has found the copper mountains and explored the coast for a harbour. Then only he retraces his steps, leaving the bleaching bones of many of his cattle behind him, and marches for eighteen days over the salt desert, with only bitter water to drink, until he reaches

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the first fresh river, the Elephant. It was a journey of five months, and by it van der Stel had learned more than any one ever knew before of the interior.

Then we find van der Stel sending ships to explore the coast as far as Natal; building a new hospital for the sick, and making the poor fellows comfortable by a thousand attentions; looking after the natives; encouraging agriculture; trying to eradicate sheep diseases; making the best wine in the country; building schools and churches; offering prizes to the children; carrying out engineering works to supply the ships with water; irrigating; clearing bush; planting forests of oak; making wise laws; and governing in all ways with the sagacity, justice, and moderation of a great man. Surely we need not—as Dr. Theal seems to do—grudge him his title to fame, or the rewards of his labours in his beautiful farm of Constantia cut out of the wilderness, which remains to this day a monument, not of his greed—as Dr. Theal suggests,—but of his honourable enterprise, and of his love for the adopted country in which he laboured so long and so well.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE HOUSE OF VAN DER STEL—*continued*

SIMON VAN DER STEL's wife, Johanna Jacoba Six, for some reason or other did not accompany her husband to the Cape. Perhaps she was too great a lady, perhaps she was timid and feared the formidable sea journey. Whatever the reason van der Stel never saw her again, though he remained devoted to her and frequently sent her money. But he had the comfort that every one of his four sons was at one time or another with him in South Africa. Adrian, his second, became governor of Amboina, and so passes out of our story; the third, Cornelis, was shipwrecked in the *Ridderschaap*, on the coast of Madagascar, it is said, and was either drowned or killed by the savages or pirates; Franz became a farmer at the Cape; and Willem Adriaan, after being magistrate of Amsterdam, succeeded his father as Governor of the Cape.

Now Willem Adriaan has been much abused, especially by Peter Kolbe and Dr. Theal, though fortunately he has had a staunch friend in Mr. Leibbrandt.<sup>1</sup> His period of rule ended in disaster; he was recalled from the Cape in something like disgrace by the Directors; his name, like that of Lord Charles Somerset, is popularly associated with harshness and tyranny.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Mr. Leibbrandt's *Rambles Through the Archives*, "Defence of W. A. van der Stel," "Journal," and "Letters Dispatched" for the period, translated by Mr. Leibbrandt from the original records.

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Yet if the records prove anything they prove that he was as good a man as his father, that he ruled wisely and kindly, and that his fall was due to a wicked conspiracy bolstered up by charges which were, one and all of them, entirely and absolutely false.

When the young man arrived at the Cape, he was warned by his father of the dangers that beset him. The old man drew up a memorandum in which, as he says, he sets down the fruits of his nineteen years' experience, and it is one of the wisest little essays in colonial government ever penned. It is also very beautiful in its modesty and precision, its simple clearness, and the noble prayer with which it ends, "that his son should be granted equity and prudence," "an upright, pure, and stedfast mind," and "that your work may tend to magnify God's Holy Name, satisfy our masters, and preserve and augment your own honour and reputation." It concerns the development of agriculture and especially of wheat growing, which is apt to be neglected in favour of the vine. The settlement of old servants of the Company should be encouraged with the aim of having a respectable class of two thousand burghers capable of carrying arms, "sufficient to meet all attacks of European princes." Then the document plunges into the vexed question of the illicit cattle-trade and the vagabonds, "willing tools of the evil-disposed," who carry it on. The evil should be cured by firm measures, the freemen should be settled together as closely as possible, and care should be taken to plant settlers who are Protestants and Dutchmen, or "members of such Germanic nations as are not engaged in the sea traffic, lest you expose your Government to the danger of a revolution. Should," he goes on, "the colony be populated by other nationalities, each individual would hold fast to his own, and all our defensive arrangements and precautions become futile accordingly. In this respect, those of the French

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nation, although settled here and well received, are the least to be trusted."

Then the old man, with a delightful enthusiasm, goes on to preach the great gospel of tree-planting, and speaks with joy of the forest of sixteen thousand oak trees which he had planted twelve years before on the slopes of Table Mountain. Though some four thousand had been destroyed by the baboons, the remainder of them were flourishing and were already thirty-six feet high, so that within a few years they would produce timber sufficient for all purposes. The burghers should be urged to plant, and the forest should be carefully tended.

Then he advises the cutting of three great roads over the mountains, and tells his son how the Company's cattle should be looked after. He passes on to the native question. The Hottentots, he says, "should be protected and governed with great gentleness, and already we have accustomed them not to make war on each other before giving us timely notice and obtaining our consent. Hitherto they have likewise never refused to appear before us to be reconciled to each other, and settle their differences amicably; submitting their disputes readily to our decision. We earnestly recommend you to continue this course."

There follows a humane passage on the hospital, not yet complete, and the treatment of the patients, "those helpless sufferers." Then comes a dissertation on the meat question, with enlightened instructions as to dealing with the virulent disease of scab, and the inspection of slaughter cattle before killing.

And later comes a passage which one might recommend to the statesmen of South Africa at the present day.

"It should also be considered whether those free-men who arrive here poor, are no agriculturists, and simply support themselves by swindling and usury, and

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sucking the marrow out of the bones of the farmers, with no other object than to become rapidly rich, and, having succeeded, to return with their booty to the fatherland as soon as their time has expired, should not, before their departure, and in addition to their passage money, pay a certain exit tax to be calculated according to the fortunes made by them here."

The son did his best to follow in the footsteps of the father. He had brought a great collection of plants and young trees with him from Holland; he went about among the farmers urging them to plant trees and improve their methods, he attended to the sick, he appointed examiners of meat, he endeavoured to capture criminals, put down cattle-stealing, and smuggling; on his farm of Vergelegen, he collected woolled sheep in order to start the wool industry, which long years afterwards was to become the staple trade of the country. But in all these reforms he trod upon many toes: the farmers liked smuggling, they liked to get their cattle for nothing from the natives, they objected to quarantining diseased animals, they objected to planting trees, they objected to growing corn. The outlaws also objected to being hanged. All these discontents joined forces, and the colony simmered with sedition. Then came one or two events which brought matters to a head.

The Governor discovered that bands of forty or fifty armed freemen, fitted out by other colonists who shared in the gain, went off on long expeditions into the interior and, after robbing and slaying the Hottentots, returned with large herds of native cattle, which they sold, spending the money in debauch. When the Company's officers went out to get cattle in the ordinary way, they found that the natives had been robbed by the white men and either had no cattle left, or had fled beyond reach. The Governor's efforts to arrest offenders brought all the malcontents about his head like a swarm

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of angry bees. There were signs of mutiny everywhere. At the annual parade day of the Stellenbosch and Drakenstein burghers, a farmer drew his cutlass on one of the officers and threatened to "lay his head before his feet." He was severely dealt with; but the mutiny went on. Some of the officers joined in it, and actually, without the knowledge of the Governor, degraded to the rank of private the one of their number to whom the rebel had objected. Things had got so bad in this burgher force, that van der Stel and his council decided to have the future parades in front of the castle, so that the burghers might be kept in awe.

The Landdrost, or magistrate, of Stellenbosch, a good man and a faithful friend of van der Stel's, reported that there was so much mutiny up country that many people had thrown aside "all obedience, duty, and respect." But the conspirators had not confined themselves to threats. They had secretly prepared a memorial which narrated a portentous list of imaginary crimes and tyrannies of the Governor, the van der Stel family, the second in command, Samuel Elsevier; the minister, Petrus Calden, and the Landdrost, Johannes Starrenburgh. This is the document which Dr. Theal elevates into a sort of South African Magna Charta.

What it contained we shall see presently; let us first see how it was prepared, and how van der Stel dealt with its authors. The chief of the ringleaders was Henning Huysing, who had made a large fortune out of the meat contract, and it is easy to understand how he should resent the stopping of the illicit cattle traffic. Then there were Jacobus van der Heiden and Adam Tas, who were known to be behind the cattle robberies, as was made manifest to the Directors many years afterwards. These, and a few others, laid their heads together and drew up the document, and then went about the country obtaining signatures. Their methods

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of obtaining these signatures were very clearly set forth in the sworn evidence annexed to van der Stel's report. Adam Tas himself admitted that none of them had laid their grievances before the Governor, admits also that there was no truth in the petition, and says that he wrote it in a "fit of mad passion," for which he was sorry from the bottom of his heart. The next witness says that he did not know the purport of what he had signed; the third witness, that he was not aware of the contents of the petition; the fourth, that there was not a word of truth in the memorial; the fifth, that he had signed the petition because the wine-lease had been given to one man, so that he could not sell his wines; the sixth, because he was afraid to refuse to sign; the seventh signed it "from simplicity and fear, because he had been compelled"; the eighth said he signed it from simple-mindedness, and because he was in debt to Huysing; the ninth said he signed it from stupidity, and because, having seen the number of signatures, he thought there could be no harm in it; the tenth, because he had lost the wine-lease; the eleventh, because he thought it was a petition to be allowed free trade in wine; the twelfth, because the conspirators had threatened to break his neck if he did not; the thirteenth signed in ignorance; and the fourteenth, because he had been knocked down, kicked, and stabbed, a pen had been forced into his hand, and a conspirator had stood over him with a cutlass, threatening him with death if he did not sign it. Not one of these witnesses could bring an atom of proof in support of any of the charges in the petition.

Why does Dr. Theal say nothing about this?

Surely after such evidence I need hardly trouble you with the contents of this document. They are refuted, completely and in detail, by William Adriaan van der Stel himself, in one of the most convincing and transparently truthful documents ever penned. He



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writes without heat, calmly and judicially, taking the charges one by one, and answering them with facts and proof of the facts. Among other things the petitioners had charged him with building a palace at Vergelegen "as large as a whole town." Van der Stel answers that Huysing had a "much larger, higher and grander house," notwithstanding that he "had arrived at the Cape as a most insignificant personage, and had for some years been there as a poor shepherd." He also points out that his land was freely granted to him by the Company's High Commissioner, and was much smaller than the portion given to Huysing by Simon van der Stel and himself. The number of his stock and his vines had been vastly exaggerated by his accusers (and Dr. Theal improves even on the accusers' figures), but if he had all that they said he had, he was within his rights and was benefiting the country. In the same way he shows by reference to the Company's books that he had never used the Company's slaves for his own private service in the manner alleged, but had paid for them according to the custom at the Cape. I have said that his defence is judicial; but sometimes he is roused to a righteous indignation, as when "the subscribers dared to charge, not only his brother, but also his old father, with such sordidness.

"The latter, having been during the pleasure of the Hon. Directors, and for so many years, and with so much love from every one, their Governor.

"And moreover, having done so much kindness to all the burghers, especially to Henning Huysing, whom" (and this is a delightful thrust) "he had delivered from the extremest poverty, and given one of his maid-servants in marriage."

Again there is delicious irony in his reply to their attack on his excise policy: "Every one can see from their sweet, gentle and instructive marginal notes how

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heavy this matter had lain on their stomachs, though it had no other object than to prevent smuggling."

But the defence rises to higher heights in answer to the charge which is the centre of the whole case, the audacious charge, that he, the Governor, had profited by illegal barter with the Hottentots. He points out that there were men in the colony "who by their deeds had revived the Spanish and Portuguese conduct, at the time of the first discoveries of the Indies." He points to the judicial evidence that forty-five burghers, taking with them forty-five Hottentots, had gone secretly and fully armed into the interior, had robbed and murdered the natives, and had returned with an enormous amount of booty to the colony. He had prosecuted them, he had obtained full confessions, he had sent the evidence to the Directors; but they in their wisdom had reopened free barter and let the atrocious outrage fall to the ground.

But all this is to anticipate matters, for van der Stel had no opportunity to make his defence until after he was recalled to Holland. Let us see what happened before his downfall.

Starrenburgh and other trusty servants kept him informed of the growing mutiny and of the seditious petition. Let us remember that at this time Holland was fighting France in the Indian Ocean. Let us remember also that some of the chief conspirators were officers of the Burgher Militia, and that this Militia was largely composed of Frenchmen who were suspected of sympathy with the enemy. What was van der Stel to do? If he had proceeded against them in the ordinary way, they might have defied him, and either taken refuge in the mountains with the other outlaws, or raised the standard of rebellion. It was a situation demanding nerve and courage, and van der Stel proved himself wanting in neither. He surrounded Adam Tas's house, arrested him, and found in his desk

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an unsigned draft of the petition, as well as documents that incriminated others. He called a broad council, making it as authoritative as possible by calling in officers from the ships, took evidence and obtained authorisation to issue a decree against conspiracy and to arrest the ringleaders. This was done. Two were committed to prison, one was sent to Batavia, and three or four, Huysing among them, to Amsterdam for trial. If van der Stel had been a harsh man he might have shot them and ended the whole business at once; but he preferred the mildest possible course, and the one nearest to legality consistent with safety. Indeed, I do not think that he exceeded his legal powers, though hostile historians regard his action as high-handed tyranny. He requested the colonists to sign a declaration testifying to his good rule. Two hundred and forty names were attached to it, against the sixty-three signatures to the original memorial. Dr. Theal would have us believe that these signatures were obtained by force; but of this I have found no proof, though the document is, of course, avowedly, and on the face of it, official. But there is no trace of any such violence or deceit as was employed on the other side. Van der Stel went on with the arrests he thought necessary; but the wily Huysing went home with the petition to start an effective career of intrigue in Holland. How dangerous were matters in the colonies may be judged from the reports of Starrenburgh of Stellenbosch. One morning, he says, he was awakened by the news that a strong body of armed men were approaching from Drakenstein. They had a drummer with them, who was beating furiously on his instrument, and two scolding women, the wives of two of the prisoners, were threatening all manner of mischief. Starrenburgh, however, treated them boldly and tactfully, and they excused themselves on the ground that they had come for the parade, though they had received no orders. A few

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days afterwards he writes for some soldiers, as he cannot trust his own, saying that some of the burghers are getting quite out of hand, the outlaws are active, the well-disposed are being intimidated, there is even correspondence going on between the prisoners in the fort and the disaffected, and unless prompt measures are taken to capture the outlaws, who are keeping the pot boiling, anything may happen. In reply van der Stel devised a plan for the capture of the outlaws by a surprise party at night. Soldiers from the fort were ordered to meet Starrenburgh's men, and they were to surround the houses where the outlaws were supposed to be in hiding. Unfortunately, some of Starrenburgh's men were false to their trust. Several of them skulked, one of them gave warning to the enemy. Near one suspected house the loyal guards caught a slave who was spying upon them. They put a rope round his neck and led him along beside the horses; but he bit through the rope, ran away, and gave warning, while the guards lost their way hopelessly in the darkness. Thus, like many well-planned night attacks, it ended in total failure. "Just think, honoured sir," exclaimed Starrenburgh, "how miserable I felt, tossed about and worried by my own men. Only the high respect which I cherish for your Honour, and your Honour's service—a glory which I highly prize—can reconcile me to the leading of this kind of life."

The colony was, in fact, simmering with rebellion, and van der Stel's night watches must have been anxious indeed. The peninsula was loyal, he could trust his soldiers in the fort, but Stellenbosch and the Drakenstein, with its Huguenots and outlaws, were in a very dangerous state. And then, like a thunderbolt, came a staggering despatch from the Seventeen. Huysing and his fellow-conspirators had won. The exiles were to return to the Cape; the prisoners were to be released; the Governor, William Adriaan van der Stel,

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the Secunde Samuel Elsevier, the Minister Petrus Calden, and the Landdrost Johannes Starrenburgh, were to leave by the first return ships for Holland, "with the retention of their pay and rank, but without retaining any authority or command." The land granted to the Governor was to be taken from him; his farm buildings might be taken over at a valuation, —or if that failed he could do what he liked with them, but the dwelling-house was to be broken down by him, "as such buildings which are for ostentation and more for pomp than use, have been built by the Company's servants at the Cape and elsewhere in India greatly to our annoyance, and in a very prominent fashion." Any-one who had lost by van der Stel was to put in a claim. The Company's officials were no longer to hold land; Simon van der Stel's title-deeds were to be inquired into; Francis van der Stel was to be exiled; and Henning Huysing was to be given the half of the meat contract.<sup>1</sup>

Now I have heard it said that the reason for this most unrighteous judgment was the jealousy felt towards the influence of the van der Stels and their relations, the Six family, and others in Holland, and in the affairs of the Company; but I am not sufficiently acquainted with the Dutch history of the time to be able to say if this is so. Perhaps Huysing's wealth may have had its influence. More likely the Company felt that van der Stel was putting the interests of the Hottentots before their own in the matter of the meat supply, as this was an old cause of quarrel between them.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Theal, in one of those admissions which are so damaging to his case, says: "One of his (the Governor's) principal opponents—Jacob van der Heiden—was at a later date strongly suspected of having been guilty of dishonest practices himself, and there is good ground for believing that the opposition of another—Henning Huysing—arose from his loss at the end of 1705 of the lucrative contract he had held for five years. At the instance of the Governor, tenders were called for, and four butchers were licensed, the price of meat being fixed at a penny three farthings a pound to the Company and twopence to burghers. Huysing resented this, and as the contract had made him the richest man in the community, he could make his resentment felt."

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Then the Company were very very jealous of their servants, whom they paid badly and always suspected—often justly—of corruption. As a matter of fact, no Company's official could live on his pay in the East. Private trading was winked at, even allowed, and the holding of land had been authorised. The grant of Vergelegen was strictly regular, and the Company's seal was attached to it by the Company's Commissioner, who had, however, or so it was alleged, omitted to notify them of the grant. At that time there was land enough and to spare for every one, so that no one suffered by the arrangement. As for the right and wrong of the quarrel, the Directors hardly go into the matter at all. It has, they say, wasted "a large quantity of paper"; it has been "greatly to the hindrance of our business"; it has "caused us no end of trouble." In the future such "distasteful subjects are not to be placed before us," but "every one is to remain quiet and in peace." In short, we are frankly bored by all this hubbub, we are shopkeepers, not imperialists, and a man who tries to administer a country righteously instead of devoting himself to the meat supply of our ships is a confounded nuisance.

Thus the Seventeen argued and thus the conspirators won. Van der Stel begged to be allowed to remain in the Cape "if only for a year, as a forgotten burgher," but he was curtly told to get out; Huysing threatened him with a preposterous lawsuit; the lives of the remaining officials were made a burden by the mean triumph of the disaffected; without land they were helpless to provide even their own eatables and were robbed unmercifully; Huysing got the whole of the meat contract; the wool industry started by van der Stel disappeared, and the poor Hottentots were murdered and robbed and enslaved until there were none left but a few miserable landless and cattleless serfs on the farms of the burghers. The cause of



Huguenots Building their Homesteads





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iniquity triumphed, and, as in revenge, the days of the Dutch East India Company were numbered.

The reign of the van der Stels is the golden period of the Cape—the period of expansion, of discovery, of industry, of house-building, of land settlement. Stellenbosch, the Drakenstein, and Frenchhoek and the glorious Land of Waveren—all these valleys of orchard and cornland and vine were settled by the personal labours of these two great governors—and for their reward they were robbed, insulted, and abused by the very men whom they had benefited. In this respect they are not alone in the history of South Africa, as we shall see hereafter.

Yet I will make bold to say that their names will remain, when those of their detractors past and present are forgotten. South Africa of the future will read its history aright, and will look back on the van der Stels as the two great statesmen who laid down the lines of the true policy—honesty, justice, humanity, firmness and fairness towards the natives—progress in agriculture, scientific farming, development of mineral wealth, organised defence, settlement on the land, tree-planting, road-making, harbour-making—for the van der Stels discovered Simon's Town and other harbours along the coast—a broad enlightened policy that the best of our South Africans have followed ever since, consciously or unconsciously. Their shades still walk under the oaks of Stellenbosch, in the mountain-valleys of the Drakenstein, on the stoep (whereon the star of their house is figured in broad mosaic) of their stately Constantia. Their courtliness, their justice, their humanity, are fragrant memories. Their stately figures give a dignity to our history. They loved the land, they loved the settlers, and to see, in the father's own words, "their cellars well filled with wine, their lofts with corn, and their chimneys and barrels with flesh and fish." "He never thought," says the son, "that in such a sweet

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and pleasant climate, such heavy and dark clouds and tempests would overwhelm and sweep him away." But the cloud of detraction is passing; indeed, thanks to Mr. Leibbrandt, it may be said to have already passed, and the star of the van der Stels shines out in our sky, as clear and effulgent as the Southern Cross.

## CHAPTER XIII

### HOW TABLE MOUNTAIN GOT ITS CLOUD<sup>1</sup>

CAPE TOWN is a city that lies at the very tail-end of Africa. It is the most beautiful city of all the earth, placed, as it were, in a cup in the crags at the edge of the world, and in its bay the warm waters of the Indian Ocean mingle with the icy currents of the unknown Antarctic seas. Over it towers the great Table Mountain, with the Lion's Head on one side and the Devil's Peak on the other, and this mountain is not strange only for its shape (for it rises perpendicular and foursquare like a table), but because it is often masked and shrouded by a wonderful white cloud, which covers its flat top like a cloth, and pours down its precipices in great folds and wreaths of mist. Sometimes the cloud is still and white and fleecy, and sometimes one would think it a cataract of foam as it rolls over and descends in mighty convolutions. Scientific people pretend that they know the reason of this miracle, that it is the congealing of the moist cold wind from the sea suddenly brought in contact with the warm land, just as water turns into steam when spilt upon a hot stove. But if we would not be fubbed off with this foolish explanation, and would inquire further into the mystery, we must go to the Malay

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<sup>1</sup> The Editor thinks it right to say that this story was in his hands several months before the publication of a poem by Dante Gabriel Rossetti on another version of this legend.

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quarter of Cape Town, and there fall a-gossiping with one of the old Hajis or Moulvis who know so much that we do not understand. They have been to Mecca, and they know all about Mahomed's coffin which hangs in the air, and the voyages of Sinbad the sailor. And if we are lucky and tactful, one of them may tell us, as he sits, clad picturesquely in a long plum-coloured robe and red fez with a turban about it, how Table Mountain comes to have its tablecloth.

Long long ago, he will say, when his ancestors were the slaves of the Dutchmen, an old burgher, by the name of van Hunks, lived in a lonely house upon the eastern slopes of the Devil's Peak. It was not called the Devil's Peak then, and though there was even at that time an occasional cloud upon Table Mountain, it never took such gigantic proportions as it sometimes does nowadays.

Well, this Mynheer van Hunks was a lonely man, big in stature and bulky in build, of a taciturn way of living, and with a face so darkly purple or fierily red that people used to be quite afraid at the sight of it, and the boldest children would not venture near his house. It was said of him that he had in his youth been huntsman to Governor van der Stel, and had once killed a lion by placing his firelock against its forehead and pulling the trigger, for those were the days when the hippopotamus still wallowed in the shallow pools of the Cape flats, and lions used to roar round the houses of Cape Town at nights. But even in those days he used to frequent the Town Tavern and the Fisherman's Tap at the Salt River, far more than was good for him. He was known to all the rollicking sailors that came in the great East Indiamen; and honest burghers used to prophesy that he would come by an evil end.

One fine day van Hunks disappeared, and for many years he was not seen in his old haunts; but

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when all his old cronies had given him up for dead he came back in a ship that every one suspected was a pirate, though the Governor was afraid to say anything. He was dressed in a magnificent coat cut out of Benares brocade, the buttons being great rubies, a flowered Calamanca waistcoat, and breeches of Chinese silk, and he had with him an iron-bound seaman's chest so heavy that two strong slaves had much ado to lift it. People said that he had made a vast fortune with the pirates, and that this chest was full of gold mohurs and pagodas and pieces of eight, Indian idols with gems for eyes and precious Portuguese crucifixes.

He had been, so the gossips would tell, with the wicked Plantain when he was King of Madagascar; he had been England's bo'sun and had served under Avery; and he was on St. Mary's Isle when Kidd and Colvert drank bomboe together and swore eternal friendship. He was at the sacking of the Mogul's treasure-ship, and had cut off the arms of Moorish princesses for the gold bangles that were round them.

But few dared even to speak to van Hunks, far less bring him to justice, for his belt was stuck full of silver pistols, and he carried a great cutlass by his side. He kept his own counsels, and made his home in the lonely house on the slopes of the Devil's Peak. It was his own, for he had paid its price out of the great chest in good doubloons. He had a few slaves to till his garden and look after his cattle; but he himself did nothing except sit on his stoep with a keg of Hollands or rackapee or some other potent spirit by his side, a bocal in his hand and a large calabash pipe in his mouth.

Thus he would sit for days together, drinking steadily and looking at his pumpkins as they grew from green to yellow. He was always smoking; indeed, he smoked more than any other ten Dutchmen put together, that is to say, more than a hundred of any other

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nation. Sometimes, when he seemed to be thinking of unpleasant things, he would puff so hard that he was enveloped in a cloud of smoke. When a ship came into the harbour, it was noticed that he was very much on the watch, as if he had not an altogether easy conscience, and there were seldom any ships in the Bay when he strolled along to Cape Town to buy the puncheon of arrack or rum or Dutch gin that was his favourite tippie.

Occasionally the old fellow might be seen making his way through the flowering sugar-bush and glistening silver trees that grew on the lower slopes of the Peak, and threading his way up until he got above the undergrowth to a favourite seat, whence with his spy-glass he could see the town and the wide ocean and the brave ships as they sailed in and out of the anchorage. There he would sit and smoke for hours together.

Now as van Hunks was sitting there one day with his pipe in his mouth and his great bag of tobacco between his knees and a mutchkin of spirits at his elbow, he saw a stranger coming down the rocks towards him. Van Hunks noticed that he limped slightly in his walk, and, as he drew nearer, that he was tall and gaunt, that he was clad in a suit of black velvet, and that he carried a large empty pipe in his hand.

“Good-day, Mynheer van Hunks,” said the stranger.

“Good-day,” replied the old pirate, gruffly.

“I come here like yourself for an occasional smoke,” the intruder continued, not in the least put out by the coldness of the welcome, “and unfortunately to-day I have run out of tobacco, so I take the liberty of asking you to fill my pipe.”

Van Hunks took up the bag and pushed it towards the stranger, who sat down without further invitation and rammed nearly half a pound of the leaf into the bowl.

“I have heard you are a great smoker, Mynheer,”

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he said, pleasantly. "No wonder, for this is good tobacco. My own tastes something too strongly of sulphur."

"Ja, ja," said van Hunks, a little mollified by the compliments, "it is good tobacco, and I smoke more, Mynheer, than any man alive."

"Now, now," replied the stranger, "that is a big boast; where I come from we smoke day and night. Come, Mynheer, I wager I'll smoke more than you at a sitting."

"What are the stakes?" said the old pirate, a spark of interest glowing in his eye.

"Your soul against the kingdoms of the world," retorted his dark companion, gaily.

"Sis!" said van Hunks, "soul have I none; and as for the kingdoms of the world, I have seen enough of them, and of the battles that are waged for them. For my part, I am content with my house and my pumpkins, my slaves and my arrack, my pipe and my tobacco; but I'll smoke against you for the love of the thing."

Then van Hunks took the bag by its two bottom corners, and shook its contents on to a large flat stone. People say that there were eight pounds, no less, of strong tobacco, damp with rum, as sailors like it. He divided the heap into two equal parts.

"Now," said van Hunks, "choose one heap and I'll take the other."

"That's fair and generous," quoth the stranger, as he laid his hands on his share; "I've taken a liking to you, Mynheer van Hunks."

"Most people love me at sight," said the sailor, grimly.

"I'm popular myself," returned the other.

"And who may you be?" asked van Hunks.

"You'll know in good time," said the stranger. "Better ask no questions. I'm loved best by those who have not yet learnt who I am."

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“Just the way with us,” said the Dutchman, “before they saw the Jolly Roger. Then they did not love us quite so much. No, Mynheer, they did not. It was walk the plank with every man jack of them. Brave days, Mynheer. Why, we captured the Viceroy of the Indies, me and La Buze. He'd enough treasure in his ship to fill our fo'c'sle with Portuguese gold and diamonds. And I was with Plantain in the Isle of Madagascar when he fought King Dick for the Princess Nelly Brown; and when we captured his noblemen we made them dance on hot coals till they dropped down and fried.

“We had each of us a palace and a harem on Saint Mary's Isle. And I was with Roberts when he caught the chaplain of Cape Coast Castle, and offered him his life if he'd say prayers and draw corks. No good came to Roberts. Too religious he was. You can see his bones hanging in chains where Challoner Ogle swung him up on the shores of the Gulf of Guinea. And I was there when Kidd and Culliford drank bomboe together and swore to be good friends. And I was there when Avery caught the Great Mogul's daughter and all the other Moorish ladies.”

Then van Hunks lowered his voice and whispered to the stranger till he shuddered and put his fingers to his ears.

At this sign that the conversation was too much for his companion, the bad man laughed loud and long, and began to sing, in a voice very deep and terrible, a pirate's chantey, of which this is a feeble translation:—

Then hoist the Jolly Roger, boys, and make Saint Mary's Isle,  
Where Moll and Sue are waiting in their cabins of the palm;  
Pull heavy on the halyards, boys, we'll spend our golden pile  
Where all the blessed island smells of ambergris and balm.

We'll broach a keg of arrack and bomboe we will drink,  
And we'll barbecue a hog, my boys, and sit around the fire;  
With puncheons of madeira, we will float until we sink.  
Yes, we'll drink, drink, drink, we'll drink until we tire!





How Table Mountain got its Cloud



## HOW TABLE MOUNTAIN GOT ITS CLOUD

Then haul on the braces, boys, and make Saint Mary's Isle,  
Where Moll and Sue are waiting in their cabins of the palm ;  
Pull heavy on the halyards, boys, we'll spend our golden pile,  
Where the breezes smell of musk and the ladies smell of balm.

Then there followed a silence, broken only by the puffing of the two smokers.

A long-tailed sugar-bird hovered over the great black velvet buds of the protea: the fishing-boats ran in from the lea of Robben Island; an Indiaman was furling his sails. But the smokers did not speak.

Puff, puff, puff, puff, and sometimes a sup at the little keg of spirits.

The sun began to sink behind the mountain, the shadow of the Lion's Head fell across the bay; the Hottentot slaves were leading home the cattle.

Never a word spoke the two smokers.

The moon arose from behind the Tigerberg, and climbed higher and higher; the waves shone like silver far below, and the white houses of Cape Town gleamed among their dark-green gardens like pearls in the depths of the sea.

Never a word from the smokers. The sky turned crystalline, then rose-red, and the mountains flamed with signals of the dawn; but there the smokers still were sitting.

Puff, puff, puff. A cloud of smoke was now about them; it swirled and eddied as it rose. It leaped the gulf from the Peak to the Mountain and clung to its rocky sides. It covered the top like a cloth. Then it rose ever higher like the smoke of the bottle the fisherman opened in the *Arabian Nights*, until it became a great pyramid over the mountain. It swung this way and that: long shreds of it fell away and swept down the precipices to the town below. Such a south-easter had never been seen, not since van Riebeck first set foot on "the watering-place of Saldanha."

## THE ROMANCE OF SOUTH AFRICA

And still the two smoked, and still the cloud grew.

The fiery and purple face of van Hunks never changed, but his nose glowed with a blue unearthly flame as he pulled at his pipe, which he only took out of his mouth when he took a sup from the keg. The stranger smoked hard, his eyes gleaming in his head with a baleful light.

The wind tossed the huge cloud in savage glee till it rocked and split and fell in fragments on the town. The burghers coughed and choked and drank brandy within closed doors, and said never had there been such a south-easter.

Day after day they smoked, and the piles on the stone grew smaller and smaller as the cloud grew larger. But van Hunks' face only took a darker purple while the stranger's grew first pale and then green. There was a damp clammy sweat upon his brow.

"Ugh!" he groaned at last, "the fumes of hell are nothing to this."

"Baccy a bit strong?" said the Dutchman, with a chuckle.

"Oh!" groaned the stranger, "you've done what the Archangel Michael could not do. Oh, oh, oh, I am prostrate, I am vanquished, I am overcome."

His pipe fell from his hand. He lay at full length on the ground, uttering the most dreadful groans.

"Hurrah!" cried the old pirate, tossing his hat in the air. "Bear heavy on the halyards, boys!" he sang in his glee. "Hurrah, I've won!"

Then he seized the keg and put it to the stranger's lips.

As he did so, he knocked off the hat that hitherto had been drawn down over his rival's brow.

The sight that met his eyes caused his knees to tremble. His hair stood on end.

"Horns!" he cried. "'Tis the Devil himself. Old Nick, as I'm a sinful man!"

## HOW TABLE MOUNTAIN GOT ITS CLOUD

Here the herd-boy who witnessed this strange scene from the kindly shelter of a sugar-bush says that flames leaped from the stranger's eyes and mouth and feet, so that the lad fainted away in his fright.

"'Tis I!" said the Devil. "Come, van Hunks!"

There was a tremendous crash of thunder, as if the mountain had been split in two. A blaze of lightning came at the same moment, making the cloud look like a pyramid of fire.

There followed a dreadful smell of sulphur.

Then the mist swept down upon the place. There was a cry, and when it rolled away there was no stranger and no van Hunks; but only a spot scorched bare of herbage where they had sat, with an empty keg, two empty pipes, a spy-glass, and two little heaps of tobacco, not more than an ounce in each.

And if you want any proof of my story, to this day the place is called the Devil's Peak.

And when there is an ordinary south-easter, an old citizen will remark that the Devil is smoking to-day.

But when it is a black south-easter, blowing great guns and tumbling cloud, then, he will say, it is the Devil and van Hunks.

NOTE.—The extraordinary cloud on Table Mountain has roused the curiosity and admiration of all travellers. The voracious Kolbe, speaking of the "Devil's Hill or Wind Hill," says: "The reasons for these appellations of this Hill are variously given. But the generally assign'd, and indeed the most probable one for both of 'em, is the terrible south-east winds caused by a white cloud, which frequently hovers over this and the Table Hill. From this cloud the south-east wind issues as from the mouth of a sack, with inexpressible fury, shattering the houses, endangering the ships in the harbour, and doing at times immense damage to the corn on the ground and the fruit on the trees." Kolbe adds that "several credible persons" assured him that in the night time for near a month together there was seen on the top of the hill "something like a large carbuncle stone; a resplendent something, resembling in the imaginations of many a serpent with a crown upon its head, and by many taken for one to their infinite terror and astonishment." The old Malays still dispute whether this "resplendent something" was the glow of

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van Hunks's nose or the light of the Devil's eyes: others incline to think it came from the pipe-bowls of the smokers. Again Samuel Daniell says in his very rare book: "These strong gales of wind are first indicated by a small fleecy cloud stretching along the summit of the mountain which gradually falling over the edge, in the course of a few hours envelops half the mountain, rising also to a considerable height above it, whilst every other part of the hemisphere is perfectly cloudless. This irregular appearance is well known to seamen by the name of the Devil's Table Cloth." Some travellers say that on the cloud's first coming it is only the size of a walnut; but this statement is contradicted by others. Many of the old travellers, however, agree in imputing to the cloud a diabolical origin, though they have been so unfortunate as to be unaware that its true cause was known only to the old Malay soothsayers, who are the storehouses of so much that is strange and curious in the history of Cape Town. As for the pirates, the Cape archives are full of references to them. The Isle St. Mary, where they usually careened, lay before Antongil Bay, 17° S. lat., on the east coast of Madagascar. The harbour was full of the wrecks of their prizes, and the shore usually knee-deep in spices taken out of their holds. Plantain, "the King of Ranter's Bay," was one of the chief of these scoundrels. "For his further state and recreation," says Downing, "he took a great many wives and servants whom he kept in great subjection, and after the English manner called them Moll, Kate, Sue, or Pegg. These women were dressed in the richest silks, and some of them had diamond necklaces."

## CHAPTER XIV

### A CAPE PILGRIMAGE—THE STORY OF SHEIK JOSEPH

THOSE who know anything of Malay life in Cape Town are aware that every year these good people go upon a pilgrimage. It is not the great pilgrimage to Mecca, which even the best Mahomedan cannot hope to visit more than once or twice in a lifetime; but a local affair in which all take part, from the toddler hardly big enough to carry washing or wear a fez, to the bent veteran who sticks to the old style of bandana handkerchief round his head, and will tell you, if you ask him, his hazy recollections of the slave days. For three or four days before there is a great bustle in the Malay quarter, a great packing of bundles and tents and provision-making, for though the journey may be made in a day it is usually a matter of three or four. The Malays are a leisurely folk, with pleasant notions of how to enjoy a holiday in the open air, and if this pilgrimage is a pious duty, it is also one of the chief pleasures in life. And so they set out in the month of April, when good Mahomedans all over the world pay respect to the tombs of their holy men. Some go in carts, making a very brave show, I promise you, the men in their red fezzes and long robes, and the women in their gay kerchiefs, amber necklaces, and bright, many-coloured silk and satin dresses. But now most of them go by train, and if you follow them you will find

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that they get out at Faure Station, on the Cape Town side of Somerset West. From there they may be seen under the hot autumn sun, trudging along the sandy road, a brilliant snake of colour among the brown bush and grass of the Flats, to where, some three miles distant, is the tomb, shining like a white star upon its hill.

It was in springtime that we made the pilgrimage, in October, the springtime of the south. The Flats were a sea of golden wattle, the veldt was blue with bavianas, and yellow with marigolds. The ground was starred with flowers—orchids, gladioli, protea—and, when we came down into the marshy land by the Eerste River, arum lilies glowed among the rank grass. We passed through cow-scented pasture and the corn-lands of Zandvliet, and so towards the sea, guided by the white star of the tomb.

It stands upon a sandstone rock which the Eerste River bends round on its way to the sea, and you can hear the breakers roaring, though unseen behind the sand-dunes. A little wooden bridge crosses the river beside the drift, and below it is a willow from whose branches hang the woven nests of the yellow fink. On the farther side the little hill rises steeply, and under it nestles a row of very ancient and dilapidated cottages. One of them is used as a stable by the pilgrims and another as a mosque, and upon its porch you will see a little notice in English that “women are not allowed inside the church,” a warning signed with all the weight and authority of the late Haji Abdul Kalil. The Malays are good Mahomedans, and keep their women-folk in proper subjection. We can fancy them outside the mosque chattering like starlings while the Faithful pray within. Inside, this little chapel is touchingly primitive and simple, with blue sky showing through the thatched roof, and a martin’s nest plastered on the ceiling of the little alcove. Between these cottages and the stream is a field of sweet marjoram, no doubt



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grown for the service of the shrine, and the way up the hill is made easy by a flight of steps built perhaps centuries ago, and ruinous with age. With their white balustrades, and overgrown as they are with grass and wild-flowers, they are very beautiful, and in pilgrimage-time we may suppose them bright with Malays ascending and descending. We mounted them to the top, where they open on a little courtyard roughly paved and encinctured by a low white wall. On the farther side, opposite the top of the stairs, is the tomb itself, a little white building with an archway leading into a porch. Beyond is a door, of the sort common in Cape farm-houses, divided into two across the middle. Of course, we did not dare to open it and peep inside; but I am told by a Mahomedan friend that the inner tomb is of white stucco with four pillars of a pleasant design. It is upholstered in bright-coloured plush, and copies of the Koran lie open upon it. The inside of the room is papered in the best Malay fashion, and over the window is a veil of tinselled green gauze. From the roof several ostrich eggs hang on strings, and altogether it is the gayest and brightest little shrine. The ostrich eggs hanging on their strings made me think of a much more splendid tomb which Akbar, the first and greatest of the Moguls, built for his friend Selim Chisti, a humble ascetic, in the centre of the mosque at Fatehpur Sikri. If any of my readers have made a pilgrimage to that wonderful deserted city, they will remember the tomb built of fretted marble, white and delicate as lace, in the centre of the great silent mosque of red sandstone—surely the finest testimonial to disinterested and spiritual friendship that exists in the world. And, if they look inside, they will recollect that around the inner shrine of mother o' pearl hang ostrich eggs just as they hang in Sheik Joseph's tomb on the Cape Flats. But this digression is only to show that the Malay of Cape Town knows what is

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proper to the ornamentation of *kramats*. The shrine is tended with pious care, kept clean and white by the good Malays—a people of whom it may be said truly that they hold cleanliness as a virtue next to godliness.

And if you turn your eyes from the little shrine and look over the broad landscape you will see that the spot is indeed worthy to be the resting-place of a holy man. On one side you look up into the valley of the Laurens, where Somerset West lies under the shadow of the Hottentot's Holland Mountains. Under the Helderberg nestle the rich farms of the Moddergat; there are green stretches of corn-land on the slopes. Table Mountain is blue in the distance, with its white plume of south-easter cloud, and between you and it lie leagues of plain, golden with willows, and near at hand Zandvliet's white barns and wine-cellars among their oaks and vineyards. Round the hill the swifts are darting, their red backs glittering like rubies in the sun. Over the stream the golden finches twitter round their pendent nests. Omar himself, an epicure in mortality, who wished to lie where the roses should fall lightly on his grave, might have envied such a resting-place.

And yet it has its salt of sadness, for it is the grave of an exile. Its story the reader may find for himself in Mr. Leibbrandt's book, *Rambles through the Archives*, or, if he prefers the original, in the mouldering pages of Valentyn.

Valentyn visited the Cape in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, and he tells us something of William Adriaan van der Stel, who was treated so shamefully by the Bond politicians of that day. He also made a pilgrimage to the tomb of "the celebrated Sheik Joseph" as he calls him, and like the pilgrims of later date, he admired the beautiful flowers and heath, and wished, as he says, that they could be painted to the life in their glorious colours. He admired also the

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farm of Zandvliet, and spoke with enthusiasm of its rich corn-lands. The farm had recently belonged to the Rev. Petrus Calden, the first minister of the old church on the Heerengracht, of which there remains now only the beautiful tower, and it was in Calden's day that Sheik Joseph was a prisoner. Valentyn in another part of his book tells Sheik Joseph's story. Two hundred years ago the Dutch were still fighting for mastery in the East Indies. They had settled in the Celebes at the beginning of the seventeenth century; but they had to fight many years before they conquered that beautiful island. Even now Dutch rule is shadowy except at the coast, for the country is so wild and rugged, its jungles so dense, and its people so intractable that the Europeans are content to occupy their trading stations and exercise a more or less ineffectual sort of suzerainty over the native chiefs. When our story opens the Dutch had been fighting nearly a century, not only in the Celebes, but all over the East Indies. They had driven out the Portuguese, they had fought the English, they had measured swords with the Macassars. Those were brave and turbulent times, when England and Holland were fighting for the gold and spices of the East. How they intrigued against one another, setting king against king and clan against clan, how they fought and murdered and massacred! In 1683 there were great doings. Robert Paddenburg was conquering the eastern part of the Celebes, and at the same time the Dutch were fighting the King of Bantam in Java. Now, Sheik Joseph, who was a Macassar or Galeran nobleman of high birth and great influence in the East Indies, took the side of the king, who was his near relation, against the king's son, who was the pretender, favoured by the Dutch. Sheik Joseph was defeated, and he was captured when endeavouring to escape, "by the clever and daring stratagem of a Dutch officer, Captain Ruis,

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who, ingratiating himself into his favour and pretending to be a Mahomedan, and a prisoner in the hands of the Dutch, persuaded him to surrender." The Dutch reduced the kingdom of Bantam to vassalage, and Sheik Joseph, whom they greatly feared, they sent as a prisoner to Ceylon. But he had such power, being looked upon as a saint all over the East Indies, that in 1694 the Dutch were fain to send him to South Africa so that he might be beyond all possibility of escape. Thither he went in the flute *Voetboog*, with forty-nine followers, wives, and children, and they were all accommodated on the farm of Zandvliet.

The Dutch appear to have used him with the consideration due to his rank and greatness. Calden, who wrote Latin verses, and may therefore be supposed to be a man of education, no doubt treated him like a gentleman, and we may imagine them debating on the merits of their religions. This at least would be no matter for surprise, since we find Valentyn debating points of theology with a Hottentot at this very farm of Zandvliet a few years afterwards, so it is fair to suppose that Calden had something of the missionary zeal, while on his side Sheik Joseph was renowned for his piety. And doubtless also Simon van der Stel, that wise, enlightened, and gracious old man, took no little interest in his visitor, and he treated him handsomely, if we may judge from the long bill of maintenance, "a heavy burdon on our revenue," as it is ruefully represented to the Company by Simon's successor. The Sheik died in 1699, the year that Simon resigned. His death took place on the 23rd of May, and his followers laid him to rest in the land of his exile, and no doubt built the tomb, since it is mentioned by Valentyn, who visited the place not long afterwards. Before his death his kinsman, the King of Goa, had earnestly petitioned for the return of the exile; but the Company would not even allow his bones to be removed, as they feared that they might be



The Coming of Sheik Joseph



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converted into objects of worship, and it was only long afterwards that his people were allowed to return. Then leave was at last given: the Government in India wrote that if his body were carried away no notice was to be taken; but this cannot have been done, since the Faithful still worship at his tomb.

From the indications given by Valentyn, as well as the reverential memory which has outlasted two hundred years among his humble kinsmen, the Malays of Cape Town, we may imagine that Sheik Joseph was no ordinary man. He was not only of noble birth, but of unusual piety, a great warrior, a great prince, and also a priest deep in the knowledge of holy things. Let us hope that in his exile his faith consoled him for the outrages of fortune. He could not but have longed for the palms and spices of his native land, which he was doomed never again to see; but it is a kind of compensation that his tomb should still be visited by his own people, and that the incense of the East should shed its fragrance round his memory.

So far I had written before I made the acquaintance of the good Haji Abdul Rahim, and that pious man, Moulvi Abdul Rakip. Abdul Rahim is a philosopher of bland and benevolent countenance, and a pillar of the mosque in Long Street. In him I confided that I knew something of the story of Sheik Joseph and desired to know more. Together we voyaged through the streets of the Malay quarter in search of his learned friend, for, he said, the Moulvi is happy in the possession of a book which will tell you everything. The sun blazed on the little, white, square-built houses which cling in terraces to the side of the hill, and on the sprawling Malay babies that played in the dust. My friend is a man of portly presence—very stately in his white pagari and sash and plum-coloured robe—but he held his umbrella more over me than himself as we climbed the hill. When we got to the house and inquired of a

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pretty, giggling, Malay girl if he were within, we were shown into the Moulvi's own room, and found him attired in a long violet cloak and a peacock-blue vest frogged with silver lace. The two good men embraced affectionately and kissed the palms of their hands in sign of friendship. Abdul Rakip is a man altogether given up to the contemplation of holy things, and when he found that I also was a searcher after truth, we became friends on the instant. He spoke Hindustani, Arabic, and Dutch fluently; but as I have only a slight acquaintance with the first language and none with the other two, Abdul Rahim acted as interpreter, the two talking together in Arabic.

I was told that the tomb of Sheik Joseph, or Yussuf, as he is called by the Mahomedans, was only one of several holy places to which the Malays make pilgrimage. There were two or three in the beautiful old cemetery on the slopes of Signal Hill, and on Robben Island the grave of a saint who was in his life imprisoned there by the Dutch, but used to sail halfway across to the mainland on a little plank to hold converse with a holy friend who sailed out in a similar fashion from Cape Town. But Sheik Joseph was chief of them all.

"Have you," said they, "no holy men of your own religion?"

I answered that we had some, but most of them died a long while ago.

"We have many," they said, "but most of them are also dead; yet we still remember them and visit their tombs."

And they impressed on me further—what indeed I already knew—that they do not worship the tomb itself, but only pray beside the tomb, regarding its occupant as a friend and intercessor—the spirits of good men having influence with Allah.

But they were more eager to find what I knew than to impart their knowledge to me. And I found that



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their book was no other than my old friend, Mr. Leibbrandt's *Rambles through the Archives*, which its possessor valued much, though he was unable to read it. But when I had told them all I knew, and the Moulvi had taken down the main points in Arabic with a quill pen, Abdul Rahim told me this beautiful story.

Doubtless, he said, the learned men of whom you speak are right; but I have heard otherwise. When I was in Mecca, I met a Malay from Batavia, one of our own people. He was a Moulvi and a man of no little piety and knowledge. We fell to talking of the history of our own people, and I told him that we had as our chief shrine the tomb of Sheik Joseph. I asked him if he knew who this our holy man really was in life. And he replied, certainly—that a great sultan in his country, who lived many, many years ago, was without a child, and grieved much because there was no heir to follow him on the throne. And he cast about and found a child of the people, whose mother had but two children, the boy and a girl. The mother was proud of the honour done to her son, and the sultan took him secretly and called him his own. This child was he whom you call Sheik Joseph. And the boy grew to manhood, and was loved, not by the sultan only, but by all the people, who looked upon him as their prince.

Now on a day as he was riding through the city his eyes fell on a maiden, poorly clad, but of beauty so wonderful that he was dazzled by her loveliness. And he made a vow that she and no other should be his wife. Then it was told to him that the girl lived alone with her mother in a poor quarter of the city.

And the prince went to her mother, for, said he, I want your daughter's hand in marriage, and I will make her my queen and set her on my throne by my side.

Then the girl's mother was overwhelmed with sorrow, for she was the very mother of Sheik Joseph, and her daughter and the prince were full brother and sister.

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But she feared to tell him, knowing that he and the people thought he was of royal blood.

And so the widow refused to allow the marriage, and would give the young man no reason. But he importuned her night and day, and gave her no peace. And he vowed as he was a prince he would take the girl by force if there were no other way.

Then the mother, sore perplexed, told Sheik Joseph the whole matter ; and, said she, the girl whom you love is your own sister.

And he was so struck by grief that he would speak to no man, and from that day he was weary of the world.

And presently he commanded that a ship should be prepared for sea, and he embarked with certain of his followers who would not leave him. They sailed for many days, not knowing whither they were going. They would have died of thirst, but the Sheik touched the salt water with his lips and it became sweet. At long last they came to the Cape, and the Sheik and his followers went out of the ship at False Bay, where the Eerste River flows into the sea. And presently Sheik Joseph died, and his followers buried him on the hill above the river where his tomb now is.

But his heart they took from his breast and placed in the ship. And they set sail again, and returned in the end to the city of the sultan. And there they buried the heart of Sheik Joseph ; but his body remains with us.

That, said Abdul Rahim, was the story told to me by the Moulvi from Batavia ; but the story of how the tomb was found was told to me by my own grandfather. Long ago on the farm of Zandvliet there was a little herd-boy, one of our own people. And every day his cattle grazed upon the veldt among the sand-hills, as you may see them to this time. But once some of the oxen strayed from the herd and were lost ; and the boy looked

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for them a long while among the sand-hills, but could not find them. Now, his master was cruel, and he was afraid to return, so he lay down upon the grass where he was and fell asleep. And in his sleep appeared to him the figure of a very noble man, who said that his name was Sheik Joseph, and that his tomb was upon the hill near by. And behind the hill, he said, you will find the oxen which you seek. Then the boy awoke; but Sheik Joseph had gone. Yet the lad knew he had not dreamed, because the air was full of fragrant incense. And as Sheik Joseph had said, the oxen were all together behind the hill.

And the lad came to Cape Town and told all our people the miracle of the tomb. And since that day we have made the pilgrimage every year. But in the old times we went there to pray, for our people used to be very pious. Now they are changed, and make it a holiday. And in the old days, as my grandfather told me, a great serpent lay upon the tomb, and if a pilgrim's heart were bad the serpent hissed at him, so that he dared not mount the steps. But now the serpent is no longer there, and any one can go up to the tomb. And some say that in the old days that hill could only be seen by the clean and pious: those who were bad or dirty could not see it. But now it may be seen by anybody.

This was the story told to me in the house of Abdul Rakip by his friend Abdul Rahim, and the reader may choose between it and Valentyn's. For myself I make no difficulty in believing them both.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE FIRST CONQUEST BY THE BRITISH

IF you have read this little history aright, you cannot fail to have seen that so far the story of South Africa has been the story of the great struggle for the wealth of the East. Portugal led the way; then Holland rose to eminence; and now we are come to a time when the power of the Netherlands has sunk low and she is only a pawn in the game between France and England. The knell of the Dutch as a world-power was struck when William the Third became king of England. From that time, more and more, Holland had to dance as her partner fiddled. By a little after the middle of the eighteenth century, England had driven France out of India, and the Treaty of Paris made her supreme in the East. The House of Orange did as England commanded, and at this time the House of Orange was the ruling power in the Netherlands. Sometimes the little country ventured to kick; but all that she could do, in her own defence, was to run from England into France, and as England was stronger than France at sea, the results were disastrous to Dutch shipping.

Thus, twenty years before the close of the century, when England was fighting her American colonists, Holland wanted to join the Armed Neutrality, and Commodore Johnstone was sent with an English

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squadron to take the Cape. Now this Johnstone was clever with his duelling pistols and a brave enough fellow in his way. He was also an adept at lining his own pockets; but nobody ever thought much of him as a naval commander. On this occasion, when he got as far south as Cape Verde, he put into the harbour of St. Iago. His ships were all huddled together in the most unseamanlike fashion, and Admiral Suffren, a dashing French sailor, who had been sent with a smaller fleet than the English to protect the Cape, saw his chance, and bore down on the English ships. Fortunately for Johnstone, Suffren's captains failed to support him, and the French attack was beaten off. But Johnstone was so much astonished at his own victory that he forgot to pursue the foe, and when at last he got to the Cape, he found that Suffren had landed a French force, whereupon the Commodore decided not to attack the settlement.

He heard, however, that five richly laden Dutch East Indiamen were lying in Saldanha Bay, which is a fine harbour with a narrow mouth, a little to the north of Cape Town. When the gallant Commodore sailed into the bay, the Dutch ran their ships ashore and made off across country. They had received orders to set their ships on fire in case of attack; but they were in such a hurry that only one was effectually set alight, while one Dutch captain was so beside himself with terror that he set on fire a neighbouring house in mistake for his ship. As the English sailors were taking pot shots at the retreating Dutchmen, the blazing *Middelburg* drifted towards the English fleet. Johnstone saw the danger, and in one of his own boats helped to tow her outside. And not a moment too soon, for directly after the boats had cast loose, the *Middelburg* blew up with a tremendous explosion. The French naturalist, Le Vaillant, had been on board the ill-fated vessel and watched from the shore the

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destruction of his treasures. He did not wait very long, however, for a cannon ball took off the head of a fugitive who was approaching him on one side, while a large dog was killed in the same way on the other. Thus, with the capture of four ships, ended the first British attack on the Cape, and it has only to be added that Commodore Johnstone was put on half-pay when he got home, while the French regiments provided scandal and entertainment for the ladies of Cape Town.

But then came the French Revolution, and the so-called "Patriot" party in Holland fell into the arms of the Jacobins. The Prince of Orange, who had crushed the Patriots a few years before, fled to England, and Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity reigned in the Netherlands. This, however, did not do Holland much good. Napoleon first pillaged the country and then set up his brother as king, while the English seized the Dutch colonies. Thus we see how great a misfortune it is to belong to a small nation.

When the Prince of Orange went to England, he beseeched his royal brother to protect his dominions. It was known that the French meant to take Cape Town, for that nation had great designs in the East, and to be beforehand with them, England prepared an expedition which was designed to defend the Cape. Admiral Sir George Elphinstone, afterwards Lord Keith, was in supreme command. If he was not one of England's greatest sailors, he was at any rate a very good one, and on this occasion showed himself, as usual, a resourceful and capable commander. The land forces were under the command of General Craig, a gallant old soldier, and the design was to join forces with General Sir Alured Clarke, who was to go to meet them from India. Elphinstone had with him a letter from the Prince of Orange, commanding the Cape Government to admit the English troops and ships of war. "You are," it said, "to consider them as troops and

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ships of a power in friendship and alliance with their High Mightinesses, the States-General, and who come to protect the colony against an invasion of the French."

Now this put the Cape Government in a very awkward position. Holland was divided against herself. There was an Orange party and a Patriot party, and it was evident that in Holland, at least for the time being, the Patriot party had the upper hand. The same divisions were apparent in the colony. Those delightful people, the burghers of Graaff Reinet, and their good neighbours of Swellendam, were, of course, enthusiastic Jacobins. They were led by an Italian adventurer called Louis Almora Pisanie, who was shrewdly suspected of being a spy in the employment of the French. The two districts declared themselves to be republics on the French model. "They prepared," says Barrow, "to plant a tree of liberty and establish a convention, whose first object was to make out proscribed lists of those who were either to suffer death by the new-fashioned mode of the guillotine, which they had taken care to provide for the purpose, or be banished the Colony. It is almost needless to state that the persons so marked out to be the victims of an unruly rabble were the only worthy people in the settlement, and most of them members of Government." They expelled the local officials, appointed "National Commandants," elected "National Assemblies," and formulated a series of highly ridiculous demands, which showed that their hold on the principles of the French Revolution was a trifle imperfect. Thus one of their principles was, "that every Hottentot taken prisoner or caught shall for his or her life remain the property of the captor"; while another is almost equally illuminating, "that declarations of amount of produce be always taken as correct, without the Landdrost being allowed to add more." In the meantime

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another section of the population was equally busy. "The adult male slaves," says Martin, "who bore the proportion of five to one of the white men, having heard their masters descant on the blessings of liberty and equality, and the inalienable rights of man, naturally desired to participate in these advantages, and held their meetings to decide on the fate of their owners when the day of emancipation should appear."

The Governor at this time was a gentleman named Sluysken, a liverish invalid from Batavia, who had been stopped on his way home to Holland and made ruler of this turbulent country, and the commander of the troops was Colonel Gordon, not a Scottish soldier of fortune, as is generally believed, but a Dutchman of Scottish extraction. These two officers, if we are to judge from their letters, had strong Orange sympathies. Thus Sluysken writes to Elphinstone: "I am heartily sorry for the fate of my country. My unhappy star enduced me to send my wife and family there two years ago, and I am alarmed that I do not find she is at present with her own family in England." And Gordon, also writing to the Admiral, says: "I am extremely sorry that I could not hitherto come aboard to pay my respects to you, being a subordinate, however, Sir George, be assured that I shall serve the common cause with all my exertions, that I abhor French principles, and that if our unhappy republic, where I am born in and served these 42 years, should surrender (which God forbids) that then I am a Greatbritainer."

Most of the Cape Town people, however, were of another way of thinking. In the same letter Gordon says that the whole country is in an uproar, "much augmented by bad designing people, who think to find their ruined finances re-established by French principles and anarchy, and by others who are the endoctrinated dupes." "In this moment," he adds, "prudence is



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necessary to bring things to a proper end." And Sluysken says: "The minds of the people are everywhere in a sort of convulsion and the best manner for every man in certain situations is to give them a little time for recollection." In the same way, Captain Dekker, who was in command of the Dutch ships in the bay, was torn between his loyalty to the Stadtholder and his duty to the *de facto* Government. In one of his despatches Elphinstone says that Dekker was "much affected" and said that he was "a man of fortune, who had lost all save his honour." The Admiral very chivalrously solved his difficulty by allowing him to sail to the East with his ships.

Most historians have tried to make out that Sluysken and Gordon were traitors to their country. For my part I do not think so. Like the Cavaliers in England at the time of the Civil War, they preferred a prince to a republic, and they had no doubt very good reasons for their preference.

But events were too strong for them. In spite of all that Elphinstone could do in the way of conciliation, he was not allowed to make a peaceful entry into the colony. The chief citizens, he found, were involved in a large issue of paper money, which they feared would be repudiated by a new Government, and they were also interested in the bad system of monopolies, which they suspected the English would bring to an end. Elphinstone was met with, as he says, "nothing but chicane and duplicity," and he found Sluysken "a cold and undecided person."

The Admiral too was in a difficult position. A large proportion of his force was down with scurvy, and there was no sign of General Clarke with the reinforcements. His fleet was anchored in False Bay, for it was the dead of winter and Table Bay was too dangerous. When the Dutch evacuated Simon's Town, he found it impossible to get provisions, and

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his men suffered both from cold and hunger, while the Dutch skirmishers fired at them from the surrounding hills. Sluysken and Gordon had, in fact, been forced into hostilities.

There was only one road to Cape Town, and that lay along the shore and directly under a range of steep and rocky hills. At Muizenburg, which is now a pretty little watering-place, the Dutch had thrown up batteries and opened trenches, completely blocking the narrow path between the mountain and the sea, and this strong position the little British force was compelled to attack. It was cunningly chosen, for the British men-o'-war could not venture into the shallow waters at the head of the bay. But Elphinstone and Craig rose to the occasion. A flotilla of heavily armed gunboats was got ready, and they sailed boldly in, and anchored among the breakers in two and a half fathoms of water, thus taking the Dutch position in flank, while a mixed force of soldiers and sailors attacked it on the front. The Dutch did not hold long to their position, but retreated on Wynberg, thus leaving the British in command of two fairly open roads, the one towards Cape Town, and the other across the Flats to the interior.

For the moment all was in confusion with the Dutch. Colonel de Lille, who had been in command of the Muizenberg position, was put in prison on a charge of cowardice, and a counter-charge of cowardice and insubordination was laid against the burghers. But the British position was not much better than it had been before. The little army could not leave the sea; they were without provisions; and as time wore on, it was decided that they must either attack Wynberg with an inadequate force, or re-embark and sail away.

The Dutch, seeing their perplexity, took courage. With twenty guns and all their forces they advanced to the attack; but at this crucial moment the starving and scurvy-stricken little British force saw what filled

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them with rapture—fifteen English ships came sailing into the bay. It was General Clarke with the reinforcements. The Dutch saw them too, and turned tail. The burghers deserted wholesale. The British attacked the Wynberg camp, and took it after a sharp fight. A British squadron threatened a landing at Camp's Bay, thus taking the town in the rear. The game was up, and Sluysken, like a sensible man, surrendered on the best terms he could get. He returned to Holland to be covered with obloquy. Certainly he did not make a very spirited defence; but the best of soldiers could not have done much more. Half his burghers were in open rebellion, and though he checked the movement by arresting Pisanie, he knew that they were only waiting for a French force to depose him. He was in a hopeless position; he was an invalid; he was fighting in a cause he did not like. What more could he have done? As for poor Gordon, he shot himself in his own garden, no doubt preferring death to the accusation of cowardice.

Thus the Cape was captured, and for the first time since the days of Shilling and Fitzherbert, the British flag was hoisted in South Africa. General Craig was made Governor, and ruled wisely and well. Elphinstone went to the East to fight the king's enemies there. But he had one more triumph in South Africa. When he was again in Simon's Bay with his fleet he heard that a Dutch fleet, which had sailed to retake the Cape, was anchored in Saldanha Bay. In heavy weather he set sail and drew up his fleet across the mouth of the bay, thus catching the whole Dutch force like a rat in a trap. The Dutch had nine ships and the English fourteen. "Humanity," wrote Elphinstone to Admiral Lucas, "is an incumbant duty on all men, therefore to spare an effusion of blood, I request a surrender of the ships under your command, otherwise it will be my duty to embrace the earliest moment of making an

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attack on them, the issue of which is not difficult to guess." Lucas took some little time to guess, but guessed right, and the fleet of nine ships, with 342 guns and two thousand sailors, as well as a force of two thousand soldiers, fell into Elphinstone's hands without a blow.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE SECOND CONQUEST BY THE BRITISH

THE English now ruled the Cape, and on the whole they ruled well and wisely. England was engaged in a life-and-death struggle with Napoleon. She was fighting all over the world. Every man and every penny she could spare were put into the war, and when all her embarrassments are taken into consideration, when, moreover, it is remembered that she only held the Cape temporarily, and as it were in trust for another Power, we may be surprised that she threw so much energy and enterprise into its administration. The bulk of the work was done by soldiers who had no training in civil affairs, yet the British rule was a vast improvement on that of the Dutch East India Company. The British have been blamed for their want of sympathy with the Graaff-Reinet settlers, yet even a hostile witness like Lichtenstein admits that these people were a turbulent and lawless set, who would have been a thorn in the side of any administration. Dr. Theal makes a great grievance of the fact that half-bred Hottentots were employed to keep them in order; but these same Hottentots had been first engaged to fight the British themselves, and had actually fought them. They were, moreover, as a Dutch official pointed out, the best, or, indeed, the only kind of soldiers for the work, and at any rate they were the only soldiers that England could possibly spare.

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For the rest, justice and peace were established; trade was encouraged; endeavours were made to improve agriculture; a more humane native policy was adopted; and although England was unfortunate in the choice of one of her governors, the eight years of her first occupation were greatly to her credit.

The nineteenth century dawned with a lurid and stormy sky, but two years after its opening there was a little rift in the clouds. The Peace of Amiens was signed, and the Cape was given back by England to the Dutch Republic. The new Dutch Governor, Janssens, was an excellent man, brave, wise, upright, who continued the good work the English had begun, and won the love of the whole colony.

But his reign was short. War broke out again more fiercely than ever, and the Batavian Republic was again under the heel of Napoleon. Lichtenstein tells us with what zeal General Janssens prepared against a second invasion of the Cape. He organised a Hottentot corps, he diligently drilled the burghers, he repaired the fortifications left by the British, and with the help of his officers drew up a plan of campaign. It was plain that Cape Town was at the mercy of a great sea power like England, and Janssens determined that his best chance was to defend the interior of the colony. To that end he prepared a strong position in the Hottentots' Holland Kloof, a high mountain pass in the steep range that guards the interior. Here he organised magazines of stores, and set up a laboratory for the manufacture of gunpowder. But misfortune attended his efforts. The harvest was so scanty that there was almost a famine in the land; an epidemic worked havoc among his troops; and his laboratory blew up, killing the officer in charge and his assistants. Still Janssens persevered, and when at last the English fleet hove in sight he had done as much as any man could do in his desperate circumstances.

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It was a majestic and awe-inspiring sight that met the watchers of Lion Hill on the fourth day of January 1806. Towering battleships, their snowy sails heaped up to heaven, great transports, dashing frigates—fifty-nine ships in all—swept into the bay that bright day of summer, and poor Janssens' heart must have sunk within him as he saw this vast Armada anchor between Robben Island and the Blaauwberg Strand.

Two of the bravest subjects of King George were in command. Sir David Baird, the leader of the expedition, was a Scot, as brave as he was zealous. He had already seen enough fighting to fill the lives of ten men. He had fought Hyder and Tippoo in India. At the battle of Damal he received two sabre wounds in his head, a ball in his thigh, and a pike-wound in his arm, and he was among the prisoners who were forced by their captor to present him with the heads of their comrades. He languished in irons in the prison of Seringapatam. There is a famous story that he was chained to a brother-officer, and that his mother on hearing the news said, "God help the man who's chained to oor Davie." He was in the army of Lord Cornwallis, and took a leading part in all the desperate fighting in his great campaign. He commanded a brigade under Wellesley, and led the storming party which burst through the breach into Seringapatam. He marched an army from the Red Sea to Alexandria to attack the French, and he marched back again to the Red Sea when his work was done. He was a man of iron and a great soldier, and moreover he knew the Cape, for during the first occupation he had been Brigadier-General under Lord Macartney.

His friend, Sir Home Popham, was a dashing dare-devil of an Englishman. His career had been at least as full of adventure as Baird's. As an officer of the fleet he had been everywhere, and when there was no work for him on His Majesty's ships he would be

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surveying on his own account in the Malay Straits, running a private venture into the ports of China, or guiding the East India Company's vessels through a new channel of his own discovery. Any little time that was left over he spent in personal war with His Majesty's Admiralty, or conducting flotillas of troops through the inland waters of Holland. He had already co-operated with Baird in the Red Sea, and had surveyed some of the coast of South Africa.

We may imagine then that these two worthies looked with glee at the white town in the distance and the hilly, arid, bush-covered land in front. But they had a tough job in front of them, for the sea was running high on the rocky shore, and there seemed to be no place where a landing could be effected. Yet land they must, and that speedily, for the French were expected with reinforcements, and, like a good strategist, Baird desired to settle with one enemy before he took on the other. As it seemed impossible to land he sent General Beresford to Saldanha Bay with part of the troops, and was about to follow.

Yet Baird was very unwilling to abandon his original plan, for he saw the great advantages of a landing near the capital, and at the first blink of dawn he was at the maintop, with a spy-glass in his hand, eagerly scanning the shore. To his delight he saw that the surf had considerably abated, and Popham joyfully agreed with him that there was now a possibility of landing, though only at one little inlet. This was an open cove clear of rocks, then called Lospard's Bay, and now known as Melkbosch. Popham ran a light brig ashore to act as a breakwater, and a little after noon the signal to land was given.

In their excitement both soldiers and sailors lost their heads. "The joy that was manifested in the countenance of every officer," says Popham in his despatch to the Admiralty, "heightened the character-



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istic ardour of the troops, and under an anxiety probably to be first on shore, induced them to urge the boats to extend their line of beach farther than was prudent, and occasioned the loss of one boat with a party of the 93rd Regiment." Every soul on board, thirty-six in all, perished among the weeds and rocks of that inhospitable coast.

But the dash of the landing took Janssens at a disadvantage, and only a feeble attempt was made to oppose it. Janssens has been blamed for this; but as he himself points out in his despatch, an attack on the troops on the shore would have exposed his forces to a murderous fire from the fleet, and no doubt he was right in deciding to engage at a place where the ships could not co-operate with the invaders. Yet Baird also was in a dangerous position, for the surf made the landing slow and difficult, and it sometimes ran so high that the work had to be stopped altogether. If the weather had got dirty the troops on shore might have been starved for want of provisions from the fleet. However, these risks were wisely taken, and fortune favoured the brave. Early the next morning the last of the troops were landed, and after a brief rest they set out on their march to Cape Town.

In front of them, ten miles away, rose Table Mountain, clear and blue in the distance, like a great castle among the clouds. Immediately in front of them was a stretch of sandy downs, sparsely covered with heath and milk-bush and low flowering protea, while a little way off, across their road to the capital, lay the Blaauwberg, behind which was the enemy. A body of five hundred sailors cheerfully dragged the guns through bush and sand, and the little army toiled along, breathless but happy at the prospect of a fight. Four miles from the landing-place they reached the crest of the Blaauwberg range, which intercepted the road almost at right angles, and saw Janssens' forces drawn up on the

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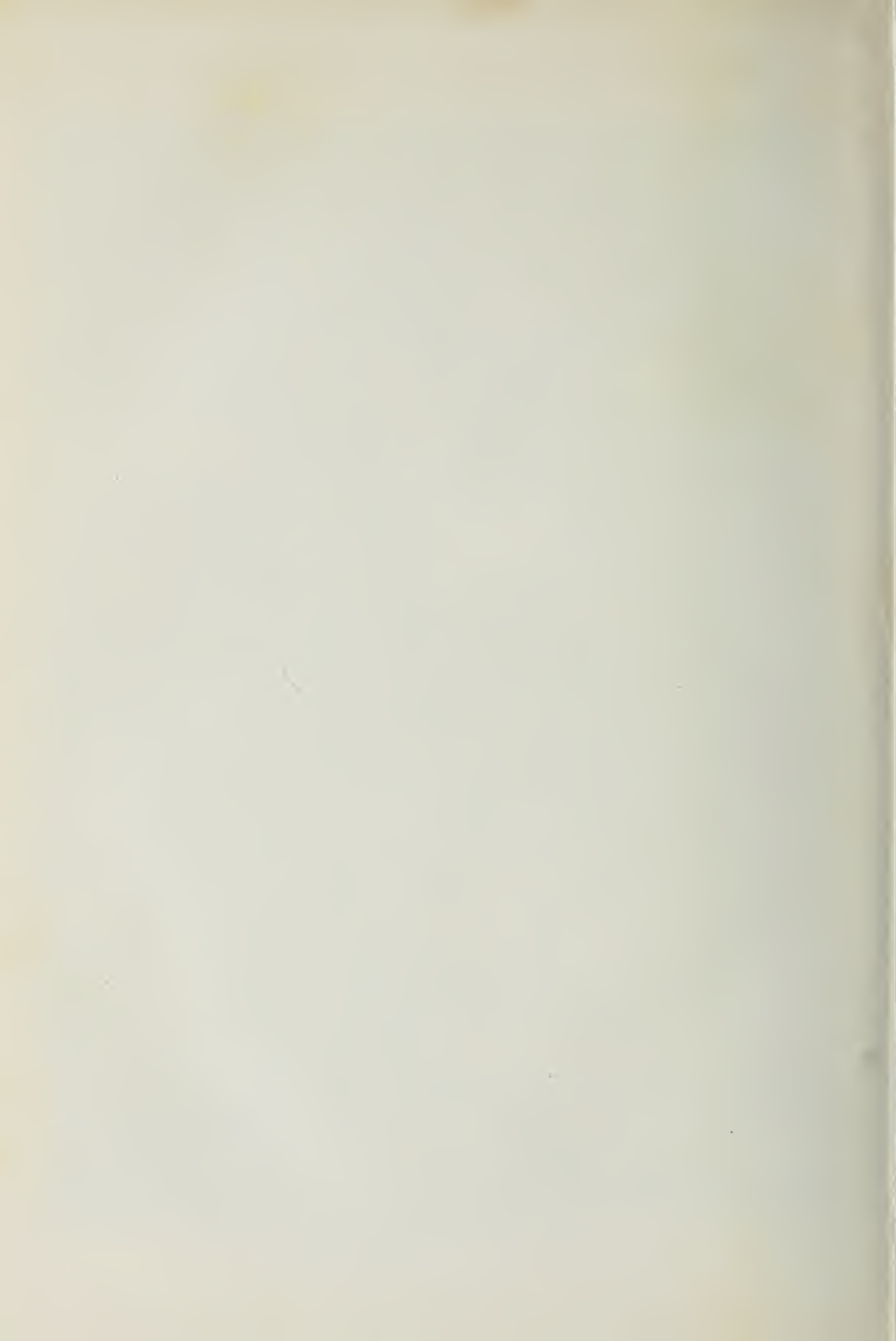
plain beyond. The British were formed in two parallel columns of brigades. The right brigade, consisting of the 24th, 59th, and 83rd Regiments, was under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Baird, the General's brother, who was destined long afterwards to find a grave at the Cape; and the left column, the Highland Brigade, was composed of the 71st, 72nd, and 93rd, commanded by Brigadier-General Fergusson.

Janssens' troops consisted of as motley a body of men as was ever brought together. As he says himself, they were of "all languages and nationalities from the other hemisphere," together with "the most respectable children of the Colony, and including even Eastern and Mozambique slaves." Besides these he had a Hottentot corps, a body of Malay artillery, and a French contingent, drawn from ships that had been chased ashore by the British frigates. He had more than a battalion of light cavalry, as well as the mounted burghers. He had a superiority in horsemen, a substantial advantage in his number of guns, and in the number of his men he was also superior, for a large part of Baird's army had been sent with Beresford to Saldanha Bay. But the invaders had the advantage in skill, ardour, and discipline. Baird commanded what were among the best troops in the world at that time, with the prestige of many victories behind them, and Janssens was disheartened by the knowledge that Beresford's army was landing in Saldanha Bay, and that in the long run defeat was inevitable. In his own words "the General was fully convinced in his own mind that victory was impossible, but the honour of the Fatherland required him to fight, whatever the result might be."

If this was the feeling of the commander, the sentiment among the troops was even less inspiring. A little time before, it had actually been said in the *Government Gazette*, with more candour than usually appears in such publications, that bets were being freely



General Janssens at the Battle of Blaauwberg



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laid in the castle that the British flag would be hoisted there by the first of January. Moreover, the German mercenaries, who composed a large part of Janssens' forces, were not likely to forget that their predecessors had been taken into the British service on the former occupation, and Janssens could see that they were not very eager to fight in a cause which meant little to them.

Baird advanced skilfully, keeping in touch with the shore and thus with the fleet, and Janssens was forced by these tactics to thin out his line, until on the shore side it was no more than a string of vedettes. On a hill upon his left front he had posted a strong body of mounted burghers, and the battle was opened by the grenadiers of the 24th attacking this position. It was a dashing assault, but the burghers as usual shot well, and an officer and fifteen men were killed or wounded before the hill was taken. In the meantime the British advanced all along their front, sometimes in line and sometimes in file from the heads of companies according to the nature of the ground. The Dutch opened fire with twenty field-pieces, and the action became general. But the British advance was too much for the spirit of the mercenaries, and the Waldeck battalion began to give way in disorder when the British were still a hundred yards distant.

What followed is best described in Janssens' own words. "The General threw himself among them, conjuring them by their former renown, the honour of Germany and of Waldeck, their beloved Prince, and whatever more he was able to adduce, to remain firm, and to show that they were soldiers worthy of the name. But neither this nor the request of their officers availed the least. They did not retreat but shamefully fled, and had he, the General, remained a longer time amongst them, they might have dragged him along with them for a while in their flight. He therefore left the cowards and joined the braver French, who were still maintaining

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their ground. Seeing, to his soul's distress, that the left wing of the 22nd battalion was giving way, he called on them also to stand firm, and they both heard and obeyed him. But the disorder had become too general to enable us to restore the line, and the French, deserted right and left, were finally also compelled to retreat with heavy loss. Colonel Gaudin Bouchier and the officer du Belloy, a nephew of the Archbishop of Paris, held their ground the longest, and the last-named was severely wounded. Riding farther straight along the line, the General found the Grenadiers and Chasseurs also retreating, but not flying. The dragoons had formed together, and upon his order marched off. He sent the Adjutant-General Rancke, and later Colonel Henry, in advance to the Reit Vlei, in order to rally the retreating troops and to form a new position there, whilst, with the officers who were round him, he kept in the rear of the retreating columns." The artillery showed splendid pluck. One of the guns had all its team of six horses shot and some of its artillery-men killed or wounded; but it was spiked before it was abandoned, and the rest of the guns kept up a cool and accurate fire, and only retreated at the urgent and repeated request of the General.

Janssens had done all that a brave man could do. Several of his staff were wounded; one had two horses shot under him, and the General himself was hit in the side, though the ball was stopped by something in his waistcoat pocket. As for the British, they were too exhausted to turn the enemy's retreat into a rout.

Moreover, they had lost considerably. A captain and fourteen rank and file were killed, and three field-officers, one captain, five subalterns, seven sergeants, three drummers, and one hundred and seventy rank and file were wounded. The Dutch lost more heavily, having three hundred and forty-seven men killed and wounded.

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The British rested for a while on the field and then proceeded to Reit Vlei. "It is utterly impossible," wrote Baird afterwards, "to convey to your Lordship, the obstacles which opposed this advance, and retarded the success of our army; but it is my duty to inform your Lordship, that the nature of the country—a deep, heavy and arid land, covered with shrubs scarcely pervious to light infantry, and, above all, the total privation of water, under the effects of a burning sun, had nearly exhausted our gallant fellows in the moment of victory, and with the utmost difficulty were we able to reach the Riet Vlei, where we took our position for the night. A considerable portion of the provisions and accessories, with which we started, had been lost during the action, and we occupied our ground under an apprehension that even the great exertion of Sir Home Popham and the navy could not relieve us from starvation."

General Janssens, true to his plan, had retired to the prepared position in the Hottentots' Holland, and General Baird, the next day, marched to Cape Town, which capitulated without much ado.

In spite of Janssens' strong position, the struggle was practically over. The Dutch were short of provisions; a large number of men had deserted, and Janssens knew that a protracted resistance would only mean suffering to the colony. General Baird was making formidable dispositions. Beresford was advancing from Saldanha Bay, and the Highland Brigade and the 59th Regiment were also sent to Stellenbosch, while a force was sent round to Mossel Bay to strike at the Dutch rear.

At the same time Baird did his best to prevent further bloodshed. In an admirable letter to Janssens, he says: "You have discharged your duty to your country as became a brave man at the head of a gallant though feeble army. I know how to respect the

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high qualities of such a man, and do not doubt that that humanity which ever characterises an intrepid soldier will now operate in your breast to check the fatal consequences of a futile contest." The fine old-world courtesy of the whole correspondence between these two brave soldiers is delightful. In another letter, Baird says, "I hope you will do me the justice to believe that a sense of duty to my country teaches me to respect and admire the operation of that principle in an enlightened enemy, and that whether the sword or the pen terminate the present discussion, we shall respectfully support a character founded on that sentiment." And Janssens, in one of his replies, says: "No choice is left us but our honour, and that is of the utmost importance, the misfortunes of our unhappy country we are sensible of in the highest degree. If it was in my power to know and judge what might be the interest of the Republic, which we have the honour to serve, then even all our personal sentiments would be sacrificed to the same . . . if there are terms that possibly can procure an accommodation, then the same only proceeds from the love and gratitude I owe the Colonists." Again in a letter to Beresford he describes "the idea of coming to an accommodation" as "the highest grief I ever felt." And he ends with words as noble as they are pathetic: "He that is superior in force may excel in granting much without wounding the honour of his arms, he even elevates the same by it. The weaker but not entirely deprived of the means of continuing the war, ought to obtain much, not to be humbled before himself, his country, and even before the enemy, and even then he gives more than he receives, and still it remains a series of sorrows, which cannot be easily effaced from the heart of a brave man." In the event, Janssens was given honourable terms. The army retained all its private property and the officers their swords and horses, and "in consideration of their gallant conduct, the troops



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will be embarked and sent straight to Holland at the expense of the British Government, and shall not be considered as prisoners of war, they engaging not to serve against His Britannic Majesty or His Allies until they have been landed in Holland."

There is a pleasant story which I am inclined to believe, that when Baird and Baron von Prophalow, the Commandant of Cape Town, were signing the capitulation of the capital in the pretty little thatched cottage at Papendorp, which may still be seen by the curious, the British band outside struck up the National Anthem, and were immediately stopped by Baird out of consideration for the feelings of the other side. Baird and Janssens were both gentlemen, and they acted towards each other after the manner of gentlemen.

And now comes the strange part of the story. Home Popham was a dreamer of dreams, and his dreams, like those of Rhodes, were of the greatness of his country. The French attack under Admiral Villeaumez had been expected, and the two friends prepared a pretty little trap for it. The English ships were to hoist the Dutch flag and to lie on either flank of the batteries, and the batteries were to be provided with heated shot. It was hoped that the French, in ignorance of the change of Government, would anchor in the centre of this pleasant ambush, before they discovered their mistake. However, only one French frigate, *La Volontaire*, of 46 guns, with 360 men and over 200 English soldiers whom she had captured in the Bay of Biscay, was caught. The main body of the French fleet, hearing the momentous news in good time, changed its course for the West Indies.

There was therefore no danger of an attack, and Home Popham told Baird his plan. This was no less than an attack on Spanish America. He said that the Spanish force at Buenos Ayres was feeble and the inhabitants discontented. From a letter afterwards

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written by Popham to the Admiralty, we learn something more of his motives. He had already, he said, discussed the matter with Lord Melville and Mr. Pitt, which was evidence enough in Popham's eyes that the British Government favoured the undertaking. "Buenos Ayres," he said, very truthfully, "is the best commercial situation in South America. It is the grand centre and emporium of the trade of all its provinces, and is the channel through which a great proportion of the wealth of the kingdom of Chili and Peru annually passes." He described in glowing terms the richness of Monte Video, the navigable rivers, the resources of the country, and the magnificent trade which it would open to the merchants of London. He added that General Miranda, who was then in London, would be a magnificent ally in the cause of emancipation in South America. Strange that Dossonville, that marvellous French spy and adventurer, should have entertained the same idea and actually opened the project to the English Government. It may indeed have been the warning he subsequently gave to Spain that helped to wreck Popham's empire.

Baird was a cautious man, and we need not wonder that he was doubtful in his attitude. But Popham had an ardent mind and a ready tongue. They were old comrades in arms, who had helped each other out of many a tight place in Egypt and the Red Sea. Popham, as a matter of fact, had no orders of any sort on the subject from his superiors; but he persuaded Sir David that the enterprise was founded on an understanding with the British Ministry, whose sentiments he knew would be favourable to the undertaking. He declared that if Sir David failed him he would start all the same and take the Rio de Plata with his sailors. All he wanted was a regiment, a small detachment of artillery, and a few light guns. Beresford, too, who was fired by the idea, and wanted to go with Popham, used all the forces of persuasion upon the commander, and at last

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Baird gave his consent. Ninety years after, perhaps on the self-same spot, another Scotchman and another Englishman arranged another Raid, with at least equally disastrous results.

To give an account of this expedition would take me too far from South Africa. Sufficient to say that Popham sailed with Baird's reluctant consent; that he prevailed on the Governor of St. Helena to give him some more troops; that they took Buenos Ayres, after driving two thousand of the enemy out of a strong position; and that they occupied a city of sixty thousand people, with a force which never exceeded sixteen hundred men. While, however, Popham was beseeching assistance in vain from England, opening a free trade and administering a new empire, a conspiracy was hatched, the little British force was attacked by overwhelming numbers in the great square of the city, and after they had lost one hundred and sixty-five in killed and wounded, were compelled to lay down their arms. The Whig Government, which was ready enough to profit by Popham's enterprise, turned upon him the moment it heard of his defeat. He was superseded and was refused even a ship in which to return to England. Sir Home expressed his disgust in a letter to his friend, Sir David. "If," he says, "an energy had existed in the Government, if Miranda had been supported, and they had sent us out some reinforcements three days after the receipt of our letter, we should have had all South America now."

But long before the receipt of this letter, Sir David had shared the disgrace of his friend, and had been recalled for his share in the expedition. The Whigs, who were in office at the time, had received the news of the General's triumph at the Cape with a most disheartening coldness, and they eagerly seized on the excuse of insubordination to recall the soldier and put Lord Caledon in his place.

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It must have been a bitter blow to Baird, for he had thrown himself into the work of government with all the zeal of his nature, though no doubt it was some comfort to him that Dutch and English colonists united in wishing him well and in regretting his departure. He was forced to embark in a common transport, a calculated insult; but when he arrived in England, he found that his enemies, the Ministry of "All the Talents," had fallen. To Lord Castlereagh, the new Minister for War, he addressed an indignant letter. After he had described the origin of the expedition and protested that he had only given Popham the troops after Sir Home had convinced him "of the strong probability, or rather entire certainty, of its success," he went on: "For this act, my Lord, which at most can be considered an error in judgment, I have not only been dismissed from the charge of a Colony, the conquest of which was achieved by an army under my personal command, but dismissed in a way that has mortified my feelings in the keenest manner, and must have disgraced me in the eyes of the Army and of the nation at large, by apparently imputing to me a degree of criminality of conduct of which I am proudly unconscious."

Before the fall of the Whigs, Popham had been tried by court-martial and reprimanded; but, as he said to Sir David, "these broils and ill-usages sit lighter upon me than upon any one else as I am more used to them."

Poor Sir David! The blow must have bit more deeply in his case, for he had not his friend's mercurial temperament. Besides, he had lost more, for he had fallen in love with the Cape, and years afterwards, when his wounds disabled him from more active service, he petitioned, though in vain, to be allowed to return there.

Such is the story of the first taking of the Cape, and so soon do we see the ingratitude of the Home Government to its servants, which has ever since been one of

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the curses of British rule in South Africa. Sir David Baird had won the Cape gallantly and ruled it wisely; but for this he received neither recognition nor reward. On the contrary, he was recalled in disgrace. His ashes may rest the more peacefully, since he was only the first thus treated in a line of illustrious public servants.

## CHAPTER XVII

### OLD CAPE COLONY

Broad streets of pleasant shade  
And houses plain and white,  
Where the broken sunbeams made  
A green and gold brocade  
Of shadow and of light ;  
'Twas how it looked, I know,  
Old Cape Town long ago.

And little running streams,  
With little bridges spanned,  
Whose waters caught the beams  
In sudden glooms and gleams,  
Flowed down on either hand,  
And music made, I know,  
In Cape Town long ago.

Between the leafy rows  
With hats beneath their arms  
And silken coats and hose,  
The gay and gallant beaux  
Ogled the ladies' charms ;  
For eyes were bright, I know,  
In Cape Town long ago.

And sailors, tawny-faced,  
Along the causeway rolled,  
With shawls about the waist,  
And pistols silver-chased  
Stuck into every fold :  
For pirates came, I know,  
To Cape Town long ago.

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And in the Bay outside  
The flute and galleon  
Swung slowly to the tide,  
And from their portholes wide  
The bright gun-muzzles shone ;  
They kept good guard, I know,  
In Cape Town long ago.

The fleets of cloudy sail  
Swept in upon the breeze ;  
Their crews with scurvy pale  
Leaned shoreward o'er the rail  
At sight of grass and trees ;  
Full glad to see, I trow,  
Old Cape Town long ago.

And when the sun went down,  
Bright sparks of twinkling light  
On water and on town  
Like jewels in a crown  
Bespangled all the night,  
And spread a golden glow  
O'er Cape Town long ago

AND now let us turn away from these main events of our history to wander for a little in its more pleasant and unfrequented bypaths. What was the life of those old people? How did they spend their time? What were their amusements? Of what fashion were their houses and their dress? What did they talk about?

All these questions may be answered with a good deal of particularity, for besides the old records which are fuller of familiar detail than such papers are generally, a large number of travellers of all nations and all points of view, and, be it said, of all degrees of accuracy, have left us their impressions. If you were to believe the opinion these writers have of one another, you could not repose belief in any of them. Peter Kolbe was among the first, and by all accounts he was a notorious liar, spending his time in drinking and smoking and hastily collecting at the end of his stay the waifs and strays of information he had picked up in

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the taverns and on the stoeps to satisfy the curiosity of the noble patron who had sent him to the Cape. His remarks on the Hottentots, however, are said to have been the work of a learned Dutch official from whom he borrowed them, and are, no doubt, more valuable. Then there was Père Tachard, van der Stel's delightful Jesuit friend; there was Le Caille, the astronomer, a learned man, but nothing of a writer. There was Thunberg, the Swedish botanist, and his more famous friend and fellow-countryman, Sparrman, whose book has much in it of interest to us. Lichtenstein, the German friend of Janssens, is excellent, though somewhat biased against the English; and Sir John Barrow is also excellent, but biased against the Dutch. His bias sinks into friendliness when compared with the opinion of that sturdy John Bull, Captain Percival, who seems to have gone through the world like Sir Willoughby Patterne, "looking over his nose with an air of indignant surprise." Supereminent among them all is, of course, Burchell, that great naturalist and observer; but for entertainment and familiar and sympathetic observation commend me to Lady Anne Barnard, whose husband was Lord Macartney's secretary in the First Occupation, and whose letters to her friend Dundas were edited not very long ago by Mr. W. H. Wilkins. Besides these there are a host of sailors, soldiers, explorers, and sportsmen (whom even to name would be a wearisome business) who have left accounts of South Africa at one time or another.

From all these books, then, let me set before you a picture of the old Cape life as it was in the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century. At that time there was no Port Elizabeth, only a military post at Algoa Bay; there was no Grahamstown; there was no Durban, no Bloemfontein, no Pretoria. The whole social life of South Africa was centred in Cape Town, though at the end of our period Stellenbosch had already



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a respectable antiquity, and that character of dignified somnolence, as of "Sleepy Hollow," that it still possesses. From Cape Town civilisation sloped away by rapid degrees to barbarism; the Dutch farmers round its skirts, and as far away as the Breede Valley, were often considerable signiors who lived in houses as stately and beautiful as those of good families in Europe, but farther away the lonely Boer grew ruder and ruder in his way of living. The colonial mansion became a hut of sun-burnt brick or wattle and daub, in which the whole family often occupied a single room, and the Boers themselves were almost as savage and unkempt as the Kafirs with whom they fought or bartered cattle.

To begin, then, with Cape Town. Under the great shadow of the mountain which never changes, it is now so altered that were it not for the majestic outline of superincumbent rock you would not recognise it in the pictures of Barrow and Burchell and others of its old delineators. Yet to this day, if you leave its main streets and explore towards Signal Hill in the more ancient part of the town, you will find that much remains as it then was. The streets in those days (as they are still) were broad and straight, so broad that the double row of oak-trees could not throw their whole surface into shadow. Along their either sides flowed little streams, canals taken from the river of sweet water which refreshed in days still more remote the sailors who first came to its banks. There being something of a slope in the ground these canals were stopped here and there by sluices, from which the water could be turned into the gardens behind the houses that lined the street. In front of these houses was a sort of verandah or stoep, a broad stone platform, with deep stone benches upon it, and sometimes overshadowed by a pergola on which hung a luxuriant vine or pomegranate or clambering rose, or all three together. In

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this pleasant arbour sat the Dutch during most of the day, drinking their wine or coffee, which latter was kept hot upon a charcoal brazier, the men smoking their pipes very solemnly, "seeming to be wrapt up in the most solemn and thoughtful dignity," and the ladies embroidering upon their tambour frames. The houses themselves were stately and beautiful, a white expanse of wall, relieved by great teak doors, usually of the kind that open in a lower and upper half, with long brass hinges curiously shaped, a fanlight above ornamented with lattice-work, and small-paned windows with ribbed shutters, frequently painted green, folded back against the wall outside, or shut close to keep out the noonday glare. The roof would either be flat and made of a kind of solder or cement, or thatched with a velvety-brown reed which grew near by, and roof and wall would meet in the most gracefully shaped and fancifully curlicued fiddle gables, often ornamented by a piece of statuary from the hands of that pleasant artist, Anthon Anreith. The door led into a great hall which cut the house in two, and was usually itself cut in half by a screen of carved wood and glass. The front half served as a hall from which opened rooms on either side, and the back half was used as the dining-hall. With these two halls there would be usually four other great rooms, and sometimes a second storey, and, if it were a house of consequence, you might pass right through into a courtyard paved with brick, shaded with vine or pomegranate, and with a pleasant fountain playing in the centre.

"The Dutch are remarkably neat in their houses," says Captain Percival. "The floors, staircases, and furniture are kept exceedingly clean and highly polished, the floors of their halls and most of their ground floors are of broad square red tiles, highly polished, glazed, or painted; the walls and ceilings stuccoed or painted, and the wainscoting adorned with looking-glasses and

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branches. Their sitting-rooms are very neat and clean : the furniture, indeed, is usually clumsy in the extreme, and looks very awkward, though kept in excellent order. Several houses, however, are not inelegantly furnished." The furniture at which Captain Percival turned up his nose was in reality very charming. High Dutch clocks in mahogany cases, ornamented with brass dials, and suns and moons that rose and set, and ships that rocked ; stately armoires of cedar-wood, big enough to hold all the thrifty housewife's fine linen and stiff silk dresses and petticoats ; "rustbanks" or settees of antique design ; capacious chairs, well suited to the generous proportions of their owners, and solid tables which groaned three times a day with their loads of steaming viands. The Dutch ate in a manner that appalled even their sturdy English visitors. At breakfast, besides tea and coffee, there was ordinarily a boiled leg of mutton with perhaps a dish of stewed beef. This first meal was at eight, but it was preceded by a cup of tea or coffee served in the bedroom after the manner of the Indian *chota haziri*. At dinner and at supper there would be roasted beef, mutton, venison, fowls, all cooked with rather too much grease to suit delicate palates. "A goose swimming in oil," says our captain, "is no uncommon dish ; or a piece of veal roasted to rags, and covered with rancid butter turned into oil, with which the meat, when it gets cold, is quite encrusted." The fat, by the way, was procured from the sheep's tail, which, being one solid lump of fat of from twelve to fifteen pounds, was quite a feature in the pastoral landscape. The customary drink was wine, which many travellers condemned as poor and harsh, though Lady Anne puts in a word in its favour : "I never saw the force of prejudice more apparent than in the way Englishmen here turn up their foolish noses at the Cape wines *because* they are Cape wines." And she goes on to relate how a certain military big-wig, filling his glass

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by mistake with some Cape steine, said, "Lord bless me, what a fine wine this is!" and when he was told of his error, "in a moment the colonel found fifty faults in it." Certainly the constantia was even then very good, and was soon to gain a great reputation in Europe, which it has since unfortunately lost.

With every meal there was an abundance of all manner of fruits in their season—great piles of peaches, nectarines, grapes and pears, oranges and pomeloes, and musk and water melons, which ought to have made up to the most fastidious for the faults of the cookery. But, as a matter of fact, many of the Dutch housewives were admirable cooks, and to this day make "confeits," syrups, curries, and liqueurs which are not to be surpassed anywhere. There is, moreover, something of the East in their cookery, a rare and spicy flavour in itself suggestive of romance.

The people who lived in those houses were of a piece with their old-world quaintness. They were stately folk with something of a somnolent disposition, especially the men, the women being by all accounts much livelier. They were nearly all merchants or officials, or lawyers by profession, and there was a very clear order of precedence to which they adhered with scrupulous exactitude. The Government being of a paternal description, even the dress of the ladies was regulated by law, and no one was allowed to wear a train or be attended by an umbrella-bearer unless she was of a certain rank in the community. As the slaves did all the manual work of the town, and the business was of the most leisurely description, the men went about but seldom; but sat upon their stoeps dressed in long snuff-coloured coats and plum-coloured breeches, with their hats on above their periwigs, smoking and taking snuff, and sipping coffee and strong liquors. Their powers of smoking were clearly abnormal. Thus Percival says in his ill-natured way:—

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I have already noticed the fondness of the men for smoking tobacco; their whole soul seems indeed entirely given up to that habit. We all know how much it is the custom in Holland; but here it is carried to a still greater excess. The men rise early in the morning, and make their appearance in a loose robe and night cap before their doors; then walk or sit in the porch for an hour or two with a pipe in their mouths and a slave by their side, holding a glass and a small decanter of gin, from which the master every now and then takes his soupkie or glass. Let an Englishman rise ever so early, he will see mynheer sitting in his stoop or porch, or parading the front of his house in the manner I have described. There are many who get up two or three times in the night to enjoy a pipe; and so much are they accustomed to this luxury that they cannot on any account dispense with it. About eight they dress, first smoking their quantum. . . . They then smoke another pipe, and go about their mercantile concerns till about one o'clock, when dinner commences. . . . When they have regaled themselves another hour with their darling pipe, they lie down to their nap, which continues till evening; they then rise and perhaps take a walk or pay formal visits, but are always sure to smoke wherever they go. Coffee and gin succeed, accompanied with their pipe, till about nine, when supper is introduced, and when that is finished, after another hour's fumigating, they retire to bed, gorged with heavy food, and perhaps destined to spend the remainder of the night with all the horrors arising from indigestion. A continual round of this mode of passing their time sums up the existence of the Dutch colonists of Cape Town, exhibiting a most lamentable picture of laziness and indolent stupidity.

All accounts are agreed that the ladies were much livelier than the men. Sir George Keith, who being a sailor was also, it is needless to say, a man of gallantry, describes them as "lively, good-natured, familiar and gay"; and Le Vaillant is so unkind as to suggest that they are too gay, the declension in their morals being set down, with an ill-concealed national pride, to the temporary presence of French troops. He tells us that for the modesty and reserve peculiar to Dutch manners, the ladies had substituted an indifferent copy of French modes, and that feathers were so much in request that Africa could not supply enough, while the theatre set

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up by the French officers set afoot so many scandals that the husbands looked upon its closing with relief. He also says that "the women in general play on the harpsichord; they likewise love singing, and are distractedly fond of dancing, so that a week seldom passes without their having several balls; the officers belonging to the ships in the Road frequently procure them this amusement. At my arrival the Governor had a custom of giving a public ball once a month, and the people of distinction in the town followed his example."

Lichtenstein, on the other hand, has the highest opinion of the Dutch ladies, and champions them against all traducers. But Lady Anne Barnard, being a woman, is not quite so kind.

Lady Anne, herself a great toast, looked down also on the style of the colonial ladies. Describing one of the Governor's dances she says:—

The ball-room was very long but somewhat narrow; perhaps it seemed narrow because it was lined with rows of Dutch ladies, all tolerably well dressed, much white muslin about and a good deal of colour. I had been told that the Dutch ladies were handsome as to their faces, but I saw no real beauty though they were fresh and wholesome-looking, while as for manner they had none, and graces and charms were sadly lacking, though they had a sort of vulgar smartness, which I suppose passed for wit. They danced without halting at all, a sort of pit-a-pat little step, which they had probably learned from some beauty on her way to Bengal.

As these quotations are all somewhat ill-humoured, let me add the remark of that admirable observer, Burchell, who had a good opportunity of judging the Cape Town ladies: "They were dressed extremely well, and quite in the English fashion; and it would be thought by many that, for personal beauty, they ought not easily to yield the prize, even to our own fair countrywomen."

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But I like to think of Cape Town at a somewhat earlier date, before French gallantry and English manners had touched the place, when it was still a colonial Amsterdam, and the Dutch people preserved the solemn graces and stately behaviour of their forebears. The gentlemen sat on their stoeps and smoked with a dignity that nothing could disturb; the ladies would walk forth with equal dignity to pay a call, attended by one slave carrying a brazen footwarmer full of charcoal and by another bearing a large red umbrella. Or, if it were night, they would go in their Sedan chairs from house to house with lanterns flitting here and there, greeting their friends as they met with a "Wel te rusten!" (May you rest well!)—rest being in their estimation the supreme felicity. Starched and rustling ladies, "well-fed, rosy-cheeked men, with powdered hair and dressed in black"—staid and worthy citizens they were.

Then a word should be said of the street scenes—tarry pig-tailed sailors wearing several pairs of breeches, one above another, rolling from the tavern; Malay slaves in their bright robes and turbans, Mozambique slaves in white cotton, Hottentot girls with sun-bonnets veiling their dusky faces. Boers come in from the country with their wagons, loaded with wine and garden produce, sixteen oxen to a wagon and a great cracking of enormous whips. The country Boers of those days were dressed in "blue cloth jackets and trousers and very high flat hats, while the Hottentot slave trotted behind him bearing his master's umbrella and dressed only in a piece of leather round his waist and a sheep-skin round his shoulders." On their way they would pass a fearsome array of gallows trees and instruments of torture. To be impaled on a spike, which ran along the backbone in such a manner that the victim lingered for days, was no uncommon punishment, and to be broken on the wheel, "without the *coup-de-grâce*," is a

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death sentence frequently mentioned in the records. "We stopped a little," says Sparrman, describing the gallows, "to contemplate the uncertainty of human life. Above half-a-score wheels placed round it, presented us with the most horrid subjects for this purpose. . . . The gallows itself, the largest I ever saw, was indeed of itself a sufficiently wide door to eternity; but was by no means too large for the purpose of a tyrannical government, that in so small a town as the Cape could find seven victims to be hanged in chains."<sup>1</sup>

This indeed is the dark side of the old colonial life; on the one side there were tyranny and occasional panic with the accompaniment of hideously cruel punishments, on the other a brooding resentment and murderous revenge when opportunity offered. Sparrman describes how in a country house the doors were bolted, and the two white men slept "with five loaded pieces hung above our bed."

Travel in the old days, when roads there were few and those of the worst, was a slow and laborious business. But the dangers and hardships were made up in some measure by the hospitality of the country people, who in their lonely situations were usually overjoyed to see a stranger. Sparrman describes a typical Boer standing in the doorway of his house:—

Without seeming to take the least notice, he stood stock-still in the house passage waiting for my coming up, and then did not stir a single step to meet me, but taking me by the hand greeted me with "Good-day! Welcome! How are you? Who are you? A glass of wine? A pipe of tobacco? Will you eat anything?" I answered his questions in the same order as he put them, and at the same time accepted the offer he made at the close of them. His daughter, a clever, well-behaved girl

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<sup>1</sup> For the horrors of slavery, see Andrew Sparrman's *Voyage* (London, 1785), pp. 337-44.



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about twelve or fourteen years of age, set on the table a fine breast of lamb, with stewed carrots for sauce, and after dinner offered me tea with so good a grace that I hardly knew which to prefer, my entertainment or my fair attendant. Discretion and goodness of heart might be plainly read in the countenance and demeanour of both father and child.

Lady Anne Barnard gives an equally pleasant account of the country life at the Cape. Her description of Stellenbosch, in particular, might have served Washington Irving for his picture of Sleepy Hollow :—

The perfection of this place consists in its extreme coolness in the midst of the most sultry weather ; it is built in long streets, perfectly regular, each street having on each side a row of large oaks, which shadow the tops of the houses, keeping them cool and forming a shady avenue between, through which the sun cannot pierce. Whatever way one walks one finds an avenue, right or left, and each house has a good garden. Stellenbosch, therefore, though there may not be above a hundred families in it, covers a good deal of ground, and is so perfectly clean and well-built that it appears to be inhabited only by people of small fortune. . . . It seems rather an asylum for old age than anything else, and I am told people live longer in it than in any other part of the colony.

I should like to quote a great deal more from these old books, especially from the pages of Burchell and Lichtenstein, whom I find I have neglected. They mirror the old colonial life, leisurely and sedate, when the slaves were building those great stately mansions, white-washed, green-shuttered, and many-gabled, with their huge doors of teak or stinkwood, their broad stoeps and pleasant pergolas, which still may be seen nestling amid their oaks and vineyards and orchards of peach and apricot trees. They show us the fat old vrouw in her starched linen and wealth of petticoats sitting in her great chair with her feet on her warming-pan and her coffee simmering upon the charcoal brazier ; the farmer

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tall and lean with his long roer, galloping after buck on his diminutive pony or smoking upon his stoep and gazing over his rows of mellowing vines. It is a pleasant picture, which indeed may still be seen in the sequestered mountain valleys of the colony, between the scarred and rocky mountain precipices that reach far up to the clear blue cloudless South African sky.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### SLACHTER'S NEK

ALL those who know anything of the history of South Africa have heard of Slachter's Nek. The very name has something of evil omen about it, and it is the gallows-tree on which the ravens of discord have sat and croaked ever since the five rebels were hanged in the memorable year of Waterloo.

To this day a great many people believe that the rebellion, which goes by the name of Slachter's Nek, was a righteous rising against the tyranny of a harsh Governor, who had goaded the Dutch colonists into revolt by unjust laws, that the victims were martyrs and patriots in the cause of freedom against English usurpers, and that their execution was an act of monstrous brutality. The official papers which give the true story have all been published by Mr. Liebbrandt; but very few people like to read a thousand pages of old letters and legal evidence, and, unfortunately, the writer who should have made the truth clear, Dr. Theal, has only been one more raven croaking on the tree.

To say that the rebellion was the result of English tyranny on the one side and Dutch patriotism on the other, is the most preposterous fable that ever was invented. The truth is that the crime for which the rebels were hanged was as detestable to the Dutch as to the English. It was a plot to murder a great many innocent

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people of both nationalities. The rebels tried to persuade the savages to slaughter all who would not join them in a raid upon the colony. After this, is it necessary to say that all right-minded Dutch people were indignant? As a matter of fact, the Dutch were as much concerned in hanging the rebels as the English. Dutchmen were in command of the forces that attacked them; Dutch burghers helped to capture them; a Dutch official prosecuted them; a Dutch judge sentenced them; a Dutch magistrate hanged them; and all that the English Governor did was to pardon one of them.

But it is always better to tell a story than to argue; so let me tell once more the sad, strange story of Slachter's Nek.

You will remember that in the time of the van der Stels, there was in the colony a class of settler which lived by robbing and murdering the natives. In the great struggle of those days this class won, and from that day to the coming of the English these people continued their bad old customs. Of course there were faults on both sides. The Kafirs and the Hottentots were by no means the innocent people that some good folks suppose them to be. If they were raided they raided back; but the fact remains that, instead of the justice of the white man, which it has always been the British aim to give them, they were shot and their land and cattle taken from them at the will of the settlers.

The British Governors tried to stop these bad practices, and very soon we have the same old quarrels as we have seen between van der Stel and Huysing a hundred years before. But the scene was changed. Stellenbosch and the Drakenstein were now quiet and settled districts. The turbulent frontiersmen had gone north and east. The Hottentots as a nation were now a thing of the past. Those who remained were slaves on the farms of the Dutchmen. The farmers had eaten

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them up, as the natives say, and were now fighting with the Kafirs for the rich valleys and pastures of the Eastern Province. The older war of extermination against the bushmen was carried on as fiercely as ever. The nature of these wars will be shown by two incidents.

One was an expedition against the bushmen, under a frontier burgher called van Jaarsveld. Van Jaarsveld reports to his magistrate that his party shot some hippopotamuses and left them lying as a bait for the bushmen. They then surrounded the place at night and fired into the crowd in the morning. "On searching," says van Jaarsveld, "we found one hundred and twenty-two dead; five escaped by swimming across the river. After counting the slain, we examined their goods, to see whether anything could be found whereby it might be ascertained that they were the plunderers: when ox-hides and horns were found which they were carrying with them for daily use."

Again the Boers, on another occasion, invited a tribe of Kafirs to discuss mutual grievances. The wily Boers laid presents of tobacco and beads on the ground and shot the Kafirs down as the savages were scrambling for these fatal gifts.

Both these massacres occurred before the British came on the scene, and I need hardly say that no British Governor would tolerate this kind of thing.

And so the trouble began. The British tried to stop the raiding, and put the charge of native affairs into the hands of good magistrates with the authority of the law behind them. If Boers were caught ill-treating or murdering their slaves, or making private raids, they were punished; and, on the other hand, the British spent thousands of pounds in keeping soldiers and police on the frontier to protect the burghers and recover their cattle when they were stolen.

But the Boers of the frontier did not like interference. Under the old Dutch rule they did as they

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pleased, and compelled whom they had a mind to, and they were soon busy rebelling against the English. At first the English were firm but lenient, and the little rebellions were put down without much trouble, though we can see from the despatches that the Government realised that with their small force, a great wild country, and countless savages just over the border, they were sitting on a barrel of gunpowder. Still they went on in the dogged old British way, settling the land question, fixing boundaries, pacifying the Kafirs, protecting the Hottentots, though not by any means spoiling them, and doing all that they could for the good of the country.

There was on the frontier a farmer, called Frederick Bezuidenhout. He did what seemed good in his own eyes, and was known as a dangerous and turbulent character. On one occasion he kept a Hottentot servant against his will, or so the Hottentot alleged. The servant complained to the magistrate—or rather, the deputy Landdrost, a good Dutchman called Andries Stockenstrom. The farmer was summoned to appear before the court. He refused. He was summoned again. He refused again, and so the judges ordered him to be arrested. Opperman, the field-cornet of the district, was afraid to tackle the job, so he was provided with a small body of Hottentot soldiers. These Hottentot soldiers were usually half-breeds, or bastards, as they are called at the Cape. Dr. Theal would like us to believe that the real grievance with the farmers was the employment of these brown-skinned men to arrest a white man, and that this was regarded as the blackest disgrace by the high-spirited Dutchmen. He also tells us that the object of the subsequent rebellion was to drive these Hottentots out of the country. Now, to begin with, the authorities were not so foolish as to ask a white man to surrender to a black. The Hottentot corps had to be used on the frontier for the simple reason

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that there were not enough white troops for the work, and also because they were cheaper, and, for some purposes, better soldiers. In this case, the warrant was presented by a white man, the Hottentots were only there as a guard, in case the high-spirited farmer should attempt to shoot the white man. As a matter of fact, through the whole course of the proceedings in the rebellion trial, there is not one word of complaint on what Dr. Theal suggests was the real cause of the trouble.

But to get back to our story. Johannes Londt, the under-bailiff, was accompanied by Lieutenant Rousseau, a Dutchman, Lieutenant Mackay, a Scotchman, a sergeant, and fourteen men. They marched all night, and when they arrived they saw Bezuidenhout, with two others, all loaded with guns, getting behind a kind of natural rampart formed by some large rocks. The embattled farmer told the minions of the law to get out or he would shoot them. For answer, Lieutenant Rousseau ordered his men to fix bayonets, spread out, and rush forward, adding the words, "Don't fire!"

Bezuidenhout and his men, however, fired ten or twelve shots, so that at last the lieutenant was forced to give the command. When the soldiers got up to the rocks, they found that the defenders had beaten a retreat. The soldiers searched the river beyond, and as they were doing so, were fired on from above. Looking up, they saw that the farmer had taken refuge in a cave on the face of a rocky precipice some ten feet above them. It was a strong place, for it could be entered by only one man at a time. The two lieutenants climbed up to the top of the precipice, where they were quite safe from being shot, and from there, time after time, called upon Bezuidenhout to surrender, promising that no violence should be used, and that he might go to the court with his own wagon and horses. This the farmer refused to do, "execrating them with

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the most cruel oaths," so that at last Rousseau ordered his men to rush the place. The sergeant, a man called Joseph, very bravely went first. As he clambered up the face of the rock his men below watched him anxiously. Now he had reached the hole, and had pulled himself up till his chest was on a level with the floor of the cave. The men below saw the point of a rifle protrude from the hole. "Sergeant," they cried out, "he will shoot you." But the sergeant was too quick. Like a flash he fired, and the bullet passed through Bezuidenhout's left arm and chest, going out at his back.

There was a cry from within. It was a half-breed servant begging for mercy. He came out, bringing with him arms and ammunition. In another hole they discovered a young Dutchman, who also came out, and three more guns were taken, with a large quantity of bullets. They left the body covered, and were going home with their prisoners, when they were met by six men on horseback, five of whom had guns. This was Gerrit Bezuidenhout with four of his sons and a servant, and they demanded what the shooting had been about. Lieutenant Rousseau gave no answer, and the party marched on. This was the beginning of the Slachter's Nek rebellion.

Frederick Bezuidenhout's funeral was a great affair. Friends gathered from all the country round, and Johannes Bezuidenhout, Frederick's brother, made a speech, in which he swore to be revenged. Then the friends of the Bezuidenhouts began to preach revolt among the farmers—not by any means a new gospel, to be sure—and to plan a rising. Fortunately, the Government officials were wide awake, and a Dutchman, called van der Graaff, the deputy Landdrost of the district of Cradock, intercepted a letter from one rebel to another and sent it on to Major Frazer, the deputy Landdrost of Albany, who, in his turn, transmitted it to Colonel



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Cuyler, who was the Landdrost of Uitenhage. The letter, which was signed H. F. Prinsloo, one of the principal ringleaders, was addressed to Jacobus Kruger reminding them of an oath which, he said, they had taken, "to remove the God-forgotten tyrants and villains." At the same time van der Graaff reported that the vagabonds of his district were busy collecting people to attack the magistrates, and that they were at the same time trying to get a large body of Kafirs to assist them. Prinsloo was immediately arrested by Major Frazer, and the fat was in the fire.

Now Dr. Theal is naturally a little ashamed of his friends the rebels for asking the Kafirs to come and fight white people. In one of his books, indeed, he leaves out this fact altogether, or only says that the Boers asked "others" to join them, while in another book he says that they justified themselves on the ground that the English were employing Hottentots against them. But before we go farther let us look at what the plans of the rebels really were, as they themselves confessed afterwards.

Shortly before, the Government had taken a large tract of land called the Zuurveld from the Kafirs with the intention of settling farms upon it. The rebels sent messengers to Gaika, the Kafir chief, asking him to help, the plan being to attack all the military posts in a single night. Lieutenant Rousseau was to be murdered, and so was van der Graaff; the troops were to be driven from the country; the Kafirs were to be allowed to take the cattle belonging to the troops, and also such cattle as belonged to those burghers who should remain loyal to the Government. The Kafirs were to be given back the Zuurveld, while the rebels were to be given a piece of Kafir-land. Thus the rebels designed to bring a vast horde of murdering savages into a peaceful colony, to burn the farms of the settlers, and to slay their fellow-colonists.

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Bezuidenhout and his friends threatened that all those who did not join would be murdered by the Kafirs, with their wives and children. The tortures which the Kafirs inflicted were described in lurid language. "The one punishment is that they split a tree and put you in the middle of it, and the other is to make your hands and feet fast, then having made a large fire, to put you before the same, and after the flame is burnt out they will lay you on the coals." At the same time these simple farmers told Gaika that Colonel Cuyler intended to visit him at his kraal and shoot him treacherously. I need hardly say how dangerous the plot was. Major Frazer says there were at one time two hundred burghers in arms against the Government (though here he exaggerates), and the Kafirs could muster ten thousand spears. Fortunately, the arrest of Prinsloo came at the nick of time. At the very moment the rebels were endeavouring to persuade Gaika, that chief got news of the arrest; while the rebels were forced to come out into the open before their plans were ripe in order to rescue their leader.

By this time Opperman, the field-cornet of the Baviaans River, whom I have already mentioned, had fled under a threat of murder, appointing in his stead an old farmer called Kruger, who was acting as field-cornet. This William Kruger seems to have been a man without much backbone, who joined the conspiracy more through fear than bad intention. However, the ringleaders were wily enough to make him their commander, and he may be said to have commanded with a pistol at his head. Prinsloo's remark about him at the beginning that he "would draw his blood with as much pleasure as a spigot out of a cask," serves to show how he was regarded by the chief conspirators.

Prinsloo was a prisoner at a military post commanded by Captain Andrews, and thither a large body

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of rebels repaired with arms in their hands to demand his release. They had already been civilly warned of the trouble they were bringing upon themselves, and when they made their demand, Major Frazer replied that he could not listen to a request from armed men. Field-commandant Nel, a Dutchman who was thought to have influence with the farmers, rode up to the band and begged of them to disperse, telling them that if Prinsloo were innocent he would not be punished. In reply, they seized Nel's bridle, asked him to join them, and when he refused, called him a traitor and threatened to shoot him. They then formed a ring, and, before dispersing, took a solemn oath to stand by one another. They sent more messengers throughout the borders threatening the settlers with murder by the Kafirs if they did not join in the rebellion. But the authorities were by this time thoroughly on the alert. The burghers were called to arms; troops were concentrated, and Colonel Cuyler sent the rebels an address, in which he begged of them to return to their duty. "Spare your blood," he said, "it depends on yourselves. It is now my friendly request that you all immediately return to your families and properties; the Landdrost Frazer has shown every indulgence, and has endeavoured by mildness to pacify you, but your deluded thoughts have prevented you from accepting his offer. . . . Judge of yourselves, burghers, whether any injury or injustice has been done you; let two of your most sensible men come to me, and I shall do you justice whenever you bring a just case before me. The two persons who may come to me shall be sent back without any hindrance."

In the meantime Gaika was behaving like the guileful Kafir he was, blowing hot and cold; first he would, and then he wouldn't, and the more timorous of the rebels were beginning to slink away home. But this and several other attempts at pacification failing, Cuyler

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marched against them, accompanied by Major Frazer, with thirty burghers and forty dragoons. The forces were not far from equal; the rebels were encamped on a strong hill, and Colonel Cuyler owned afterwards that he doubted, if it had come to a fight, whether his burghers would have fired upon the rebels.

Cuyler, however, was a brave man. He showed no sign of hesitating, summoned the rebels to surrender, and advanced upon the hill.

The rebels knelt down and presented their guns, while they shouted to the burghers to move to one side so that they might have a clear shot at the dragoons. The burghers wavered; it was a hazardous moment; but just at this time the rebels received a staggering blow which took all the fight out of them.

A group of horsemen were seen riding up the hill. They were the envoys that had been sent to Gaika, and at this dramatic moment they returned with the polite but disheartening message from the great chief on whose help they had set so much store, that if the rebels "wanted to fight, they might do so."

Then came a panic. Poor old Kruger was the first to give in. With a number of others he had been weeping copiously, and now he called out, "Let me go down, in God's name, and receive my punishment." He was joined by nearly twenty others, who ran down the hill, threw away their arms, and, falling on their knees, besought forgiveness. The rest fled, and so ended the bloodless battle of Slachter's Nek.

Major Frazer, with a hundred men of the Cape Regiment, and Commandant Nel, with twenty-two armed burghers, set out in pursuit of the fugitives. They got on the tracks of the Bezuidenhout gang, and, marching day and night, got to a kloof or pass in the wild Winterbergs, through which the rebels had to pass with their wagons. Unfortunately, Major Frazer fell from his horse and broke his arm, so that his command

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was given over to Lieutenant M'Innes, who, with Ensign Mackay, took up their positions so as to command the road. Nel and another party went farther up the river, where they waited in ambush until the rebels should pass.

Presently—it is easy to imagine the scene—the fugitives came along the rough track. Wagon followed wagon, with great straining of oxen, shouting, and cracking of whips, we may be sure. There were the three ringleaders, Bezuidenhout, Bothma, and Faber, with their wives and families, their cattle, sheep, and horses. Unsuspectingly they walked into the trap and outspanned within the ring of enemies.

Then Bothma and Faber, the one unarmed and on foot, the other armed and on horseback, went down the river, examining the spoor of the soldiers. When they had got within thirty paces of the hiding-place, the word of command rang out, and the rebels faced a line of soldiers with muskets ready.

They were told to stand; but Faber turned his horse and went off at a gallop, while Bothma took to his heels. Mackay fired a shot over Faber's head; but as he would not stop, the soldiers fired upon him. He dismounted and was just in the act of lifting his gun, when he was bowled over with a ball in his shoulder. Bothma crept into a hole and was there caught by the soldiers.

While this was going on, Bezuidenhout, with his gun across his saddle, rode towards a little kloof, but seeing soldiers there, turned back to the wagons and dismounted. M'Innes, with his hat on his gun, beckoned him to surrender, and Nel and another burgher also shouted their advice that he should give himself up. But Bezuidenhout refused and began to fire, his wife keeping him supplied with loaded muskets. Dr. Theal draws a heroic picture of this last stand. "His code of honour," says that historian, "was in some respects

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different from that of modern Englishmen, but it contained at least one principle common to the noblest minds in all sections of the race to which he belonged; to die rather than to do that which is degrading. And for him it would have been unutterable degradation to have surrendered to the Pandours." Now, as a matter of cold, hard fact, Bezuidenhout was asked to surrender, not to the Hottentots, but to Commandant Nel and two British officers. By resisting, he was placing the women and children in the wagon in a position of great danger. His wife and his young son were both wounded. This is not the sort of courage that the truly chivalrous will much admire. However, Bezuidenhout paid for his rashness with his life, for after killing a soldier, he himself was mortally wounded.

We need not delay long over the end of this miserable story. The prisoners, thirty-nine in number, got a fair trial. Six of them were condemned to death, and five were actually hanged, the sixth being pardoned by Lord Charles Somerset. Most of the others were let off with very light punishments—a small fine, or a month in prison—and among those who received a free pardon was poor old William Kruger, the unwilling leader of the conspiracy.

The Governor seems to have left the whole business in the hands of Colonel Cuyler, a brave and loyal Dutchman, who had proved himself, time and again, a good friend of the Boers, but who had certainly never been any friend of the Hottentots. He saw the danger of the position. Though he says that only sixty-five had been in arms, those that remained in their homes were in a wavering state. "Fancy to yourself," he writes, in one of his despatches, "a people of the description of the Boers, all marksmen, well-mounted, and the knowledge of the country they possess! Foreign troops cannot act against them. We now see when one brother is brought against another.

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how he acts. Whom, then, are we to depend on? The Hottentots are the only people." Again he points to the fact that all the families who were engaged in the former disturbances were implicated in the rebellion. "This calls for example, as in the first affair they were all pardoned. . . . Something severe must be done and that without much delay to ensure the tranquillity of the borders."

Thus, so far from the Slachter's Nek business being a brutal piece of tyranny on the part of an English Governor, it was the result of the savagery of a pack of border ruffians, who were determined, in their own words, "to extirpate the villains of Englishmen out of our country"; who refused to listen to friendly warning, and who were punished very leniently for one of the most dastardly plots ever hatched by white men against their fellow-countrymen.

## CHAPTER XIX

### KAFIR WARS

WE have seen how the Dutch settlers spread out like a fan from the mother colony of Cape Town. To the north they went from mountain valley to mountain valley, until at last, breaking through the great rocky gorges, they swept up on to the Karoo itself. But the chief movement was eastwards, along the valleys that run east and west and down the rivers that flow towards the Indian Ocean. As they went the country became ever wilder and more picturesque. The climate grew milder, as they came within the range of the warm eastern sea, the rainfall grew heavier, and the vegetation more luxuriant. The valleys and ravines were forest-clad. Great timber-trees, hitherto unknown to man, climbed up out of a tangle of underwood. The Kafir-boom showered its purple blossoms in light and airy sprays, the geranium flooded the underwood with scarlet flowers, the tree crassula and the scarlet cotelydon mingled their blossoms; the spiky aloes raised high crowns of blood-red flowers; the giant euphorbia stretched their weird, green, leafless branches towards the sky, and from the higher trees fell wreaths of wild vine and tangled monkey-rope. The deep courses of rivers were marked by the light-green foliage of willows, and here and there thickets opened out into meadows of sweet grass covered with gorgeous flowers. Suddenly



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out of the forests rose huge masses of cliff, of deep-red and other glowing colours, rising high up into the blue sky in precipice upon precipice. Such were the valleys of the great Fish River and the Kei, with their neighbours and tributaries, and they rose among great mountain-ranges like the Winterberg, whose peaks were white with snow, and through whose narrow valleys came the rains that fell at long intervals upon the desolate plains of the great Karoo.

These valleys and wildernesses were peopled with vast herds of elephants and antelopes, gnus and quaggas and zebras; the rocks were alive with baboons; snakes glided among the bushes; the rocky kloofs sheltered the lion and the leopard, the wild buffalo and the rhinoceros fed on the river banks; and in the rivers themselves the hippopotamus floundered in the pools. On the Karoo flocks of ostriches lived in friendly intercourse with zebras and antelopes that passed over the wilderness in such herds that they sometimes covered the whole landscape as far as the eye could see.

Into this wonderful country the Boer farmers were pressing towards the end of the eighteenth century, and by the beginning of the nineteenth they had come face to face with its human inhabitants, very different people from the Hottentots and Bushmen whom they had enslaved or exterminated. The Kafirs were big men, tall and straight, and nearly black, with splendidly developed limbs and bodies, and features sometimes as straight and well-formed as those of Europeans. They lived in large villages of round, well-built huts; they used utensils of earthenware and basket-work; they had great herds of cattle and sheep and goats; they cultivated fields of maize with their iron hoes; they had chiefs and councillors and law-givers; they were in every way far in advance of the Bushmen and Hottentots. They wore karosses or cloaks of beautifully-dressed hide adorned with beads and the tails of wild animals;

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their arms were covered with copper and ivory rings. They had little aprons or fringes of leather and beads about their waists, and below the knees usually hung the end of a cow's tail. Their warriors carried a bundle of iron-tipped assegais and a heavy knobkerry—a stick with a round head; they had large oblong shields of bullock-hide; and their heads were ornamented with the long curved tail-feathers of the crane. These people were not scattered in small bands like the Hottentots, but consisted of great tribes numbering thousands of warriors. Against these people the white settler was destined to carry on intermittent warfare for more than fifty years before peace was finally settled, and black man and white agreed to divide the pleasant land between them.

It would be a wearisome business to tell the whole story of these wars. There were massacres on both sides. Sometimes the white man drove the black far eastwards and occupied his land, and sometimes a wave of savagery swept westward and drove the new settler back again into the older territories. The Dutch farmer by himself would not have held his own had he not been supported by the British Government.

The origins of the quarrel, indeed, go back to times before the British occupation. Some of the old stories resemble nothing so much as the pitiless, treacherous feuds between the Lowlands and Highlands of Scotland in olden time. Thus in 1780 the famous van Jaarsveld invited the Kafirs to discuss their grievances, and shot them down as they were scrambling for his presents of beads and tobacco. The Kafirs, as I shall presently show, were just as treacherous. Then, some years later, Tjaart van der Walt, a veteran leader of the frontier Boers, fell in a disastrous conflict near the Konga River. The debatable land chiefly consisted of the Zuurveld, an undulating tract of light soil, with here and there a patch of rich land, between the Bushmen and the Fish

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Rivers. This country the British Government at last resolved to give to the frontier Boers, and in 1811 Sir John Cradock organised an expedition under Colonel Graham to drive the Kafir tribes—twenty thousand strong—across the Fish River.

Twelve hundred soldiers and eight hundred burghers took part in this war, and it was at this time that Slachter's Nek, the mountain pass of which I have already spoken in the previous chapter, got its ill-omened name.

It happened thus. Mr. Stockenstrom, the Landdrost of Graaff Reinet, had a camp of armed burghers on the north side of the Zuurberg. After going to Gaika, the great chief, and persuading him to take no part in the war, he left his camp again to cross over the great mountain range in order to confer with Colonel Graham. The camp he left in charge of his son, then Ensign Stockenstrom, who was afterwards to take part in quelling the Slachter's Nek rebellion. The father took with him only forty burghers, for the war had not then begun, and he did not expect any fighting, though some of the troops were at this very moment entering the Zuurveld. Major Cuyler was on the right, Colonel Graham and Captain Frazer were with the centre, and Stockenstrom himself had command of the left wing of the expedition.

On their way over the mountains Stockenstrom and his party had to pass along a narrow ridge since called Slachter's Nek, which connects two arms of the great mountain-chain. It is a wild and savage place. Above rise the stupendous cliffs of the mountain peaks broken into all manner of fantastic shapes; below are no less tremendous abysses, of which the bottom, jagged with rocks and shaggy with jungle, can only be faintly distinguished. The wild ravine, lined with tall trees and thick brushwood, holds a tributary of the Fish River, while another no less sombre and picturesque stretches

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down into the valley of the Koornay, while far below on either side rolls the waste of hill and valley, jungle and grassy plain.

Along this narrow pass, where sometimes a false step on either side might throw horse and rider into the gulfs below, Stockenstrom was passing when he observed bands of Kafirs coming out of the thickets and massing themselves so as to close the road. The Boers advised an immediate attack, on the good military principle that it is wise to strike first ; but the Landdrost thought he saw a fine chance of persuading the Kafirs not to make war, and against the advice of his two field-cornets, Potgieter and Gryling, rode straight up to the armed warriors and saluted them in a friendly way. The field-cornets and some of the Boers followed, doubtful, but determined to share the fate of their leader. Stockenstrom sat down, smoked a pipe with the chiefs, and began to discuss terms of peace. His words seemed to have effect ; but a dark mass of Kafirs were gathering near and gradually grew more threatening in their words and gestures. It is said that at this moment word had come to them that fighting had already commenced to the south and blood had been shed ; but whatever the cause the murder of the party was determined upon.

One of the Landdrost's followers was whispering his suspicions, and Stockenstrom was in the act of replying that there was no danger, when the Kafir war-cry echoed among the rocks and the savages rushed upon the white men. Stockenstrom and fourteen of his men fell pierced by a hundred assegais, while the rest of the little force galloped along the ridge amid a shower of spears.

A little bush-boy brought the news to young Stockenstrom, who hurried towards the spot with twenty men. On the way he met the Kafirs triumphantly returning with the guns and horses of the murdered men. But now they were in open ground, and in the fight that followed they received a terrible punishment

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from the muskets of the mounted Boers. Next day Captain Frazer, with a party of cavalry, met the Ensign after himself defeating a desperate attack of the enemy, and together they found the bodies of their comrades and buried them in a nameless grave somewhere near the crest of that wild pass.

But in spite of this disaster, the war was successful: the Kafirs were driven over the boundary of the Fish River; a line of military posts was established and garrisoned by regular troops, burghers and Hottentots, and the frontier was thus secured. But it was secured only upon a doubtful and dangerous tenure. The Kafirs never ceased to make raids upon the settlers' cattle, and many were the fights and murders in this wild borderland.

The Colonial Government made the great chief Gaika their ally; but 'Slambie, Hintza and other chiefs continued their depredations, and jealous of his friendship with the white man, attacked and defeated him at the battle of Debe Nek, taking from him 9,000 of his cattle. A fugitive, he appealed to the Government for help, and Colonel Brereton (of Bristol Riots fame) marched into Kafir-land, attacked the kraals of the hostile chiefs, captured 20,000 cattle, of which he gave half to Gaika and divided the rest among the settlers who had been robbed.

Now at this time there was in Kafirland a young native called Makana and sometimes "Lynx." He was very different from the ordinary type of Kafir, and it was even said that he was descended from some unhappy European woman who had been thrown on the shores of Kafirland by shipwreck. However that may be, Makana was a clever man. He made friends with the missionaries, learned a good deal about their doctrines, and, mingling them with native superstitions, formed a new religion of his own, calling himself "the brother of Christ." He practised all the arts of Mahomed, assuming "a reserved, solemn, and abstracted air," and by such

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means gradually collected a great following. Though he was of lowly birth even the chiefs acknowledged his power, and he was consulted on all matters of importance. When Brereton carried punishment into the heart of Kafirland, Makana preached a holy war. The Great Spirit, Uhlanga, he said, had sent him to avenge the wrongs of his people; he had power to call up the spirits of their ancestors from the grave to assist them in battle, and he could render the guns of the white men of no effect. They were to drive the colonists into the ocean, and having done so they could then sit down and eat honey.

Such was Makana's eloquence that he had soon gathered a great army of some nine thousand warriors in the thickets of the Great Bush River opposite Grahamstown. His plans were cunningly laid. Colonel Wilshire, the commandant of Grahamstown, had an interpreter, Klaas Nuka, who was really in the service of Makana. This wretch told Wilshire that he "heard a noise towards Kafir Drift," meaning that the enemy was crossing at that point, a long way from the true place of crossing. Thus the colonel was induced to detach a hundred of his small force of 450 men to reconnoitre in that direction, and this part of the force was not present when the attack took place.

Early on the morning of the 22nd of April 1819, Colonel Wilshire was inspecting a detachment of his troops, when a Hottentot buffalo-hunter, Captain Boezac by name, told him that Makana was advancing along a line of country known as the Queen's Road. The colonel, with an escort of only ten men, galloped off to see for himself, and at a turn of the road he suddenly came upon part of Makana's army lying in a ravine which skirts the open plain subsequently turned into a racecourse. The colonel turned his good horse "Blucher," and not a moment too soon, for the enemy were after him like lightning. But he escaped, and

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reaching his troops, with "Blucher" in a lather of foam, they awaited the rush of the enemy.

The troops were arranged in a hollow square on the slopes of some high land outside the town. They consisted of four companies of the 38th Regiment, and there was besides a well-secured company of artillery.

At the break of dawn Makana had formed his warriors in order of battle and made them a speech, in which he promised them the aid of the spirits of earth and air. Inspired by his words they had followed Wilshire at a run and charged up the hill only a few moments after he arrived at the square, which fortunately had been drawn up in his absence. As Wilshire galloped up he called out the order to fire. The guns opened with shrapnel and the muskets of the 38th rang out in a volley. The Kafirs were mowed down in swathes, while their showers of assegais fell short or had lost their force before they reached the troops. Not since Francisco Barreto fought his great battle in East Africa in the middle of the sixteenth century had there been such a slaughter.

But just as in that fight the witch had promised invulnerability, so now Makana told his men that the guns of the soldiers were only loaded with hot water, and the great mass of warriors surged forward, breaking their last assegais by Makana's order to use them as stabbing weapons in a hand-to-hand fight. If they had reached the troops it might have gone ill with the 38th, for the Kafirs were twenty to one. But just at this moment when, as Wilshire afterwards said, "He would not have given a feather for the safety of the town," Captain Boezac with a hundred and thirty of his buffalo hunters rushed forward upon the enemy's flank along the river-banks from the old Cape Corps barracks. They got close up to the Kafirs, and singling out the chiefs, whom they knew well, they bowled them over as fast

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as they could fire and reload their long elephant guns. At the same time Lieutenant Aitcheson of the artillery loaded with grape and opened anew more destructively than ever. Some of the Kafirs rushed forward almost to the guns before they fell. But it was their last effort. Makana, urging them to the last, was borne away in the headlong flight, and the broken enemy sought refuge among the ravines to the east of the town. Two thousand Kafirs were left upon the field, and many more must have crawled into the bush to die; some of them were found afterwards with grass plugs stuffed into their gunshot wounds in a vain attempt to stop the bleeding. Among the slain was Nuka, the interpreter, who was well punished for the false part he had played. When we remember that there were only two six-pounders and 350 soldiers against an army of between eight and ten thousand splendid fighting men, we see that this defence of Grahamstown was one of the great battles of South Africa. And we must not forget the brave Hottentot, Captain Boezac, and his followers, without whom the town could hardly have been saved.

Makana had been so sure of victory that he sent a message to Wilshire promising to breakfast with him that morning, and some thousands of Kafir women and children were found on the hills above the town with their mats and pots and cooking jars, calmly waiting to take possession.

Lord Charles Somerset lost no time in dealing a heavy counter-blow. The burghers of the whole colony, east and west, were called out. Andries Stockenstrom, now Landdrost in place of his father, commanded a thousand of them; Commandant Linde led the Cape burghers for the first time into Kafirland, and a force of 12,000 colonials and troops crossed the Keiskamma, being joined by six hundred of Gaika's warriors. But only women and children were found. The men had driven their cattle over the Kei. At last, after two



## KAFIR WARS

months of marching and counter-marching, the troops beheld the warrior chief and prophet walking into their camp, followed only by two of his wives.

“If I have made the war,” he said, “let me see if delivering myself to the conquerors will restore peace to my people.”

The officers were struck by his lofty demeanour. They made him prisoner, and he was placed on Robben Island, where van Riebeck had imprisoned Herry nearly two hundred years before. A year or two afterwards, with some of his fellow prisoners, he attempted to escape in a boat, but it was capsized, and poor Makana was drowned among the surf and thick seaweed somewhere near the spot where Baird lost thirty-six of his men in landing to attack Janssens. Thus miserably perished the Mahomed of the Kafirs, but for long years his people would not believe that he was dead. They waited for his second coming with the pathetic confidence of the early Christians, and it was only after nearly thirty years of waiting that they abandoned all hope and sorrowfully buried his ornaments and spears. He had done what he could to atone for the destruction he had brought upon his people, for with his surrender the war ended, and there was a short spell of peace on the eastern frontier.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This sketch of Makana's attack on Grahamstown is taken in the main from the account by the late Mr. C. L. Stretch of Somerset East, one of Colonel Wilshire's officers who took part in the defence. His description was published in that delightful old periodical, the *Cape Monthly Magazine* (1876).

## CHAPTER XX

### THE 1820 SETTLERS

THE wars had left the Zuurveld an empty wilderness devoid of habitation, which the Boers did not dare to enter for fear of the Kafirs nor the Kafirs for fear of the Boers. Now at this time many people in England were in a state of dire distress. The terrible strain of the wars which ended in Waterloo was having its after-effect; soldiers and sailors were disbanded by the thousand; shipping ceased to be a British monopoly; and the high price of bread and the bad state of trade combined to make the poor somewhat more miserable than usual and the rich less able to help them. The hungry began to clamour, and the Government, at its wits' end, conceived the brilliant idea of sending some of their surplus population to a land where there was soil to till and no one to till it. Mr. Vansittart in the House of Commons, and Lord Sidmouth in the House of Lords, described the Cape as a sort of earthly Paradise, and the scheme caught the public mind. Nearly a hundred thousand people offered to go, and of these close on five thousand were selected. Parliament voted fifty thousand pounds to defray the expense of conveyance, and on the 10th of December 1819 the first of the transports sailed from the Downs, about twenty others following as fast as they could get the people and stores on board.

## THE 1820 SETTLERS

They were a mixed assemblage—shrewd Scottish farmers, burly Somerset yeomen, loutish field labourers whose ancestors had chewed bacon from the days of Hengist and Horsa, fine ladies and gentlemen, exquisites who were tired of gaming and thirsted for the simple life, weather-beaten watermen and sailors from the Thames and the English seaports, old soldiers who had fought in every country in Europe, and pale-visaged artisans and mill-hands from the great cities. There were Anglicans and Presbyterians, Methodists and Dissenters, for the emigration was unlike both that of the Huguenots and the Puritans in the happy circumstance that religious persecution had nothing to do with it. But religious zealots there were, and on one of the ships, the *Brilliant*, the peace of the voyage was wrecked by two such fanatics as had given so much trouble to van der Stel more than a century before. One, as Pringle tells us, was “a tall, grave Wesleyan coachmaker,” and the other “a little dogmatic Anabaptist surgeon,” and these two soon split the emigrants into two discordant factions of Arminians and High Calvinists. “Heated by incessant controversy for three months, many of them, who had been wont formerly to associate on friendly terms, ceased to regard each other with sentiments of Christian forbearance; and the two rival leaders, after many obstinate disputations, which became more intricate and intemperate every time they were renewed, had at length finally parted in flaming wrath, and for several weeks past had paced the quarterdeck together without speaking or exchanging salutations.” There was a sad end to the quarrel. The Wesleyan died on board and was carried ashore to make his long home in the new land in which he had hoped to live. The little Anabaptist wept bitterly over his grave, and then he too, only a few days after, was seized with an illness of which he died. He was buried beside his old enemy, and there they still lie together, “their mouths

## THE ROMANCE OF SOUTH AFRICA

stopt with dust," in eternal amity, somewhere beneath the busy streets of Port Elizabeth.

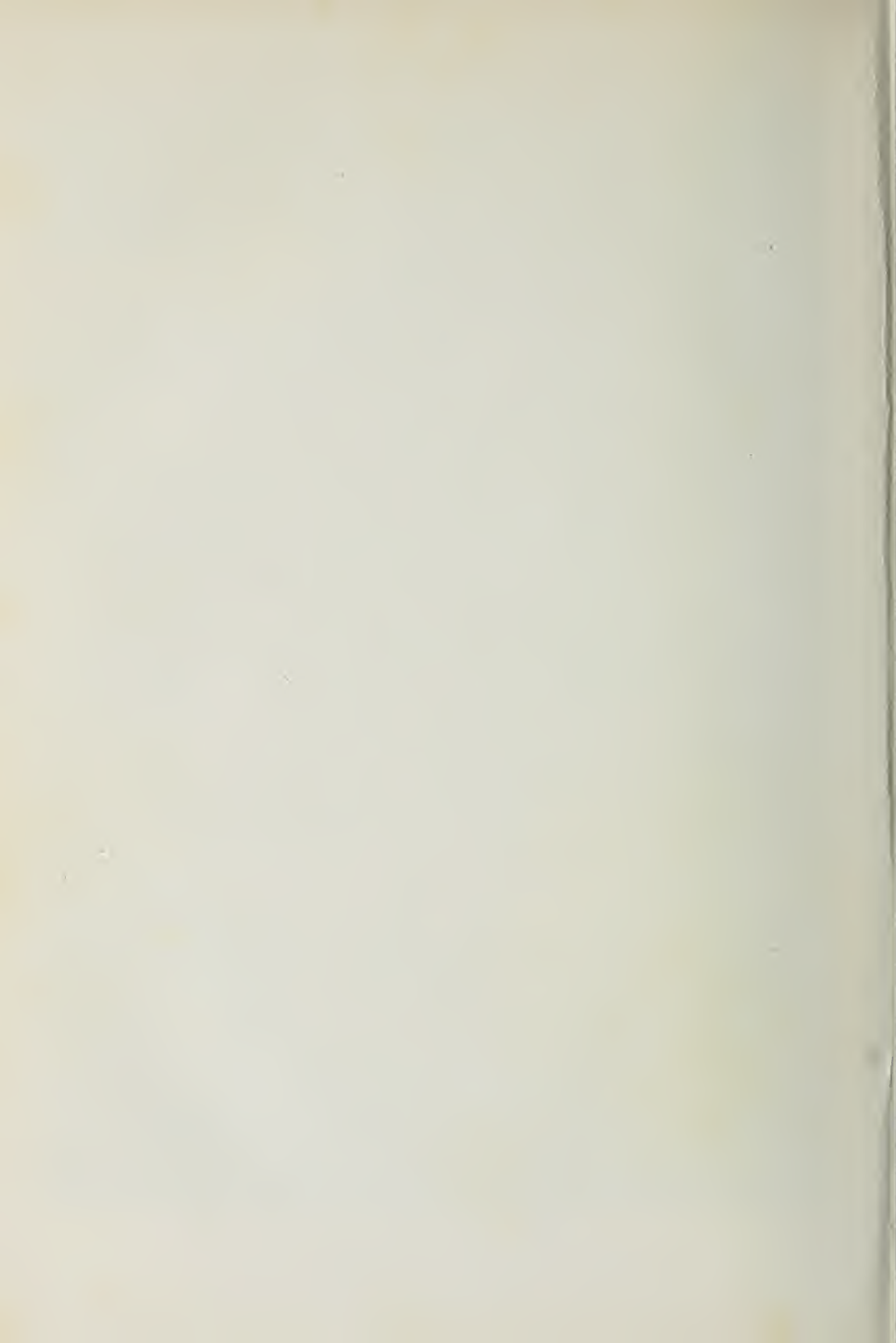
As for their followers, the lesson was felt to be from God. There was an end of strife, and the two parties settled down amicably together in the village of Salem.

In the meantime the work of landing went busily on. Party after party was brought through the surf by the cheerful sailors, to be placed in the brawny arms of the Highland soldiers, who worked like heroes on the beach, often up to their necks in water. A busy camp was soon formed on the shore, where the settlers, surrounded by their belongings, ranging from Scotch ploughs to fashionable carriages, waited for their turn to march into the interior.

While they were waiting, Sir Rufane Donkin appeared on the scene. He was a brilliant soldier who had served his country all over the world. His latest service had been with the Marquis of Hastings in the Mahratta War in Western India, where by his skilful movements he had cut off the enemy's line of retreat. But his triumph was marred by a terrible sorrow, for his young wife, whom he had married only three years before, died at Meerut. Broken in mind and body, he was invalided to the Cape, and there, during the absence of Lord Charles Somerset, he acted as Governor. He threw himself with his whole heart into the work of settlement, and after making arrangements for the reception of the settlers in the interior, went down to Algoa Bay to superintend the last stage of their journey. Here he laid the foundation-stone of the first house of the new town, which he called Port Elizabeth, in memory of his dead wife, Elizabeth Markham, eldest daughter of Dr. Markham, Dean of York, and he also built an obelisk to her memory on one of the adjoining heights. Sir Rufane lived to be an old man, honoured for his work in war and in scholarship, but he never forgot his first love, and when he was buried in Old St.



1820 Settlers and their Boer Convoys



## THE 1820 SETTLERS

Pancras Churchyard, the urn which held his wife's heart was buried with him. But the real memorial of this sad love story is the great town of Port Elizabeth.

Sir Rufane had brought together a large number of Boers with their wagons. These wagons were stronger and heavier than any vehicle the new settlers had ever seen. They were built of well-seasoned colonial wood by the wagon-makers of the Paarl. They were covered with canvas tilts to protect the travellers from sun and rain, and were drawn by teams of from ten to sixteen oxen over all sorts of country—rock and bush and river drift. In front sat the driver wielding an enormous whip which made the oxen strain on the long rope of twisted thong, while a young Hottentot, running before, led the first pair of oxen by a thong attached to their horns. In this way the settlers jogged along through a country stranger and wilder than anything they could have conceived. At night they pitched their tents or spread their blankets on the ground, and Pringle has given us a vivid sketch of these encampments. The Boers of those days, as we may see from the coloured plates of Daniell, wore huge broadbrimmed hats with high crowns, short coats of blue cloth of the cut known as spencers, and country-made trousers usually cut and sewn by their wives or Hottentots out of the skins of antelopes. Round their waist was a broad leathern belt, from which hung a pouch of home-made bullets and a large ox horn full of powder. They wore neither boots nor stockings, but what was much more suitable, veldschoens or mocassins made of dressed hide. Pringle describes how fires were lighted to scare away the wild beasts, and the horns of the oxen fastened to the wagon wheels:—

The Boers unslung their huge guns (or roers, as they called them) from the tilts of the wagons, and placed them against a magnificent evergreen bush, in whose shelter, with a fire at their feet, they had fixed their place of repose. Here, untying each his

## THE ROMANCE OF SOUTH AFRICA

leathern scrip, they produced their provisions for supper, consisting chiefly of dried bullock's flesh, which they seasoned with a moderate *zoopje*, or dram, of colonial *brandewyn*, from a huge horn slung by each man in his wagon beside his powder flask. The slave men and Hottentots, congregated apart round one of the watch-fires, made their frugal meal, without the brandy, but with much more merriment than their phlegmatic masters. In the meanwhile our frying-pans and tea-kettles were actively employed; and by a seasonable liberality in the beverage "which cheers but not inebriates," we ingratiated ourselves not a little with both classes of our escort, especially with the coloured caste, who prized "tea-water" as a rare and precious luxury. . . . The Dutch-African Boors, most of them men of almost gigantic size, sat apart in their bushy *biel*, in aristocratic exclusiveness, smoking their huge pipes with self-satisfied complacency. . . . These groups, with all their variety of mien and attitude, character and complexion—now dimly discovered, now distinctly lighted up by the fitful blaze of the watch-fires; the exotic aspect of the clumps of aloes and euphorbias peeping out amidst the surrounding jungle, in the wan light of the rising moon, seeming to the excited fancy like bands of Caffir warriors crested with plumes and bristling with assegais; together with the uncouth clucking gibberish of the Hottentots and Bushmen (for there were two or three of the latter tribe among our wagon leaders), and their loud bursts of wild and *eldritch* laughter, had altogether a very strange and striking effect, and made some of us feel far more impressively than we had yet felt, that we were now indeed pilgrims in the wilds of savage Africa.

Let us follow Pringle's party to its destination. Including Thomas Pringle the leader, his father, and other relations and their friends and servants, this little band of Scots was composed of twelve men, three of them farm hands, six women, and six children. With their Boer convoy, they crossed the Great Fish River, and arrived at its tributary the Baviaans, which five or six years before had seen the hatching of the Slachter's Nek rebellion. Up this river they went, meeting on their way our old friend Groot Willem Prinsloo, pardoned for his share in the rebellion, and now living peacefully on his farm at the mouth of the glen. He treated the visitors kindly, and they went on, fortified



## THE 1820 SETTLERS

by his brandy and fruit and vegetables, up the wild bed of the river. Sometimes the mountains drew back from the river, leaving space for pleasant meadows sprinkled with mimosa trees. At other times they came close, so that only a narrow defile was left just broad enough for the stream to find a passage, while precipices of naked rock rose like ramparts to the height of many hundred feet, and seemed to overhang the stream upon whose huge boulders the oxen slipped and stumbled. Sometimes the party had to hew their way through tangled jungle, sometimes they had to remove rocks with crowbar and pick; but at last, when the oxen were nearly worn out and two wagons had broken down, they got through the last poort, and from a high ridge looked down on the end of the valley.

“And now, mynheer,” said the Dutch-African field-cornet who commanded our escort, “*daar leg neve veld*”—“there lies your country.” Looking in the direction where he pointed, we beheld extending to the northward a beautiful vale, about six or seven miles in length, and varying from one to two in breadth. It appeared like a verdant basin, or *cul de sac*, surrounded on all sides by an amphitheatre of steep and sterile mountains, rising in the background into sharp cuneiform ridges of very considerable elevation; their summits being at this season covered with snow, and estimated to be about 5000 feet above the level of the sea. The lower declivities were sprinkled over, though somewhat scantily, with grass and bushes. But the bottom of the valley through which the infant river meandered, presented a warm, pleasant, and secluded aspect; spreading itself into verdant meadows, sheltered and embellished, without being encumbered, with groves of mimosa trees, among which we observed in the distance herds of wild animals—antelopes and quaggas—pasturing in undisturbed quietude.

This pleasant spot the party called Glen Lynden, and here they pitched their tents, and sang that old Scottish Paraphrase:

O God of Bethel! by whose hand  
Thy people still are fed;  
Who through this weary pilgrimage  
Hast all our fathers led.

## THE ROMANCE OF SOUTH AFRICA

Here too they kept the Sabbath, with two services, the first of which "concluded with an excellent discourse from a volume of sermons presented to me on parting by my honoured relative the Rev. Dr. Pringle of Perth." An antelope, we are told, came and listened, "gazing at us in an innocent amazement." What an odd conjunction of circumstances when one comes to think of it—an African oribi listening to a Scottish Paraphrase or a sermon by the reverend minister of Perth.

Here too the party built huts "which were constructed after the fashion of the country, simply of a slight wooden frame, thatched with reeds down to the ground." They ploughed the ground with their Scotch ploughs to the wonder of their neighbours; they raised stock; they made butter and cheese, soap and candles; they tanned sheepskins with mimosa bark, and cut them into jackets and trousers; they had face to face encounters with lions; they killed snakes when they came in through the doors; they built an oven out of an old ant-hill; they "planted an orchard of apple, pear, peach, apricot, almond, walnut, plum, and lemon trees, and a small vineyard, the whole encircled by hedges of quince and pomegranate." They "succeeded in raising abundance of pumpkins, melons, beetroot, parsnips, carrots, lettuce, onions, cabbage, cauliflower, etc." In short, they did everything that van Riebeck had done when he came to Table Valley nearly two hundred years before.

And so it was with the other settlers. Some of them throve and some of them foundered. Some went into the towns and took to trade, others traded with the natives, others became hunters; but many stuck to their farming through good and evil fortune. They generally chose some fertile bottom or narrow ravine of the Zuurveld, an immense plain of undulating park-like country. Here they built their wattled cabins and raised their cattle and sheep-folds and garden fences.

## THE 1820 SETTLERS

At first they had very hard times. They sowed wheat, and the wheat was blighted for three successive years; their vineyards and orchards were eaten up with locusts; Kafirs stole their cattle; great floods swept away about half of the houses of the whole settlement. Jackals and hyænas killed their young stock, lions went off with their horses. Elephants, "too big to wrestle with," as one old lady said, trampled down their gardens; baboons stole their pumpkins. Worse still, their friend Sir Rufane Donkin had a quarrel with Lord Charles Somerset, an obstinate and cross-grained old gentleman, who upset the former's wise administration and bullied or neglected the settlers.<sup>1</sup>

All this weeded out the weaklings; but the others held on obstinately, and, at last, in the darkest hour, help came. An association was formed in Cape Town for the relief of the settlers, and the good Pringle used his eloquent pen to draw the attention of the British public to the position of affairs. Money poured in to the extent altogether of £10,000; Lord Charles Somerset visited the eastern districts and himself set right his own mistakes; loans and title-deeds were issued, credit was re-established, and the position was saved. Thenceforward, though they had many calamities, the Eastern Province settlers steadily rose in prosperity, and now they are a grand race of farmers and townsmen, good colonists and brave sons of the Empire, who have turned their country into one of the finest parts of South Africa.

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<sup>1</sup> The most terrible calamity of all, however, occurred on the way out. This was the destruction of the emigrant ship *Abeona* by fire near the Equator. Of the 140 Scottish emigrants, who sailed from the Clyde in this ship, only sixteen escaped.

## CHAPTER XXI

### MORE KAFIR WARS

THE desert blossomed as the rose. In the kloofs and valleys of the Zuurveld, where for years only wandering tribes of Bushmen and Kafirs and trekking Boers had pastured their cattle, the colonist's home appeared, its walls of whitewashed clay or brick, its garden hedged with quince and pomegranate, its kraals fortified with branches of mimosa to keep out the jackals. Little white-haired Saxon children began to tumble about in the dust and sunshine; the lions and elephants, "too big to wrestle with," sought more sequestered haunts beyond the frontier or in the forests of Knysna. Man's voice was on the mountains, and the lowing of his herds in the cattle-folds.

But the bitterest trial of all was yet to come. The Kafirs, as we have seen, were very different people from the Hottentots and Bushmen. They loved fighting for fighting's sake just as much as the Red Indian or Rob Roy's Highlanders, and when they wanted cattle for a wedding dowry they made a raid upon the settlers. Many good people—missionaries and others—spoke of them as an innocent and down-trodden race who turned upon the white man in just exasperation. But the truth was very different. Of course they suffered wrongs, as was inevitable when the white settler met the black savage. But they also inflicted them.

## MORE KAFIR WARS

And we must remember that the country of the Zuurveld, and the district of Albany, over which so much fighting took place, was, to begin with, no more the Kafir's than the European's. Old travellers of the eighteenth century tell us that the westernmost outposts of the tribes were then not much beyond the Kei. They were, in fact, invaders from the north and east, just as the settlers were invaders from the north and west. The two waves in their opposing courses met upon the Zuurveld, and a tremendous conflict was the result. But if natural ownership has anything to do with the case, the natural owner was the Bushman or the Hot-tentot, and he, to be sure, had a bad time between the invading armies.

At their best the Kafirs were pleasant, laughing barbarians, without much sense of right or wrong or mine and thine; at their worst they were cruel, blood-thirsty, treacherous savages. When superstition swayed their minds they practised fiendish cruelties. They would pin a man down to the ground and cover him with black ants which ate him to death, or they would cover him with hot stones which burnt their way into his vitals. They had made the Fingos their slaves and treated them cruelly, and when they wanted cattle they raided the colony and took what they could lift, often murdering the herdsman who tried to protect his property.

The farmer, on his side, had the power to call a patrol of the military, ride on the spoor after the thieves, and take the cattle or their equivalent from the village which harboured them. This was called the Reprisal System. It was a rude form of justice, and perhaps the only possible one at the time; but it led to occasional bad practices which exasperated the Kafirs beyond measure. Captain Andries Stockenstrom, the son of the Landdrost who was killed at Slachter's Nek, was now Commissioner-General of the Frontier. Certain

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of the chiefs were suspected of making raids upon the colonists' cattle, and Stockenstrom rode in with a commando to recover the stolen animals. His field-commandant Erasmus reported to Stockenstrom that the chief Zeko had attacked him in a thick bush, that he had defeated and killed Zeko and several of his people, and had taken that chief's cattle. Stockenstrom at first believed the story, but afterwards discovered that Erasmus and his men had gone to Zeko's kraal, had seized his cattle, and had shot Zeko and his men while the Kafirs were unarmed and without provocation.<sup>1</sup>

Thus on both sides there were raids and murders, and it was into this simmering pot that the 1820 settlers were thrown. At first all was quiet. The destruction of Makana had given the land peace and the new settlers time to establish themselves.

They had fourteen years of truce and then the storm broke. The Kafir chiefs had gathered their power secretly, and then with a sudden rush they burst over the Bushman's River and into the colony. On the night of 21st December 1834 they entered the settlement, nearly ten thousand naked crane-plumed warriors, advancing along a line of thirty miles, murdering, robbing, and burning as they went. Most of the settlers, however, were warned in time, and galloped away, leaving their flaming homesteads behind them. One good lady was in the act of making the Advent pudding when her husband rushed in, caught her up, threw her on a horse and rode off with her, leaving the yelling savages to wreak their fury upon his cattle and homestead. By the 26th the raiders had reached nearly to Uitenhage; many farmers had been murdered; flam-

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<sup>1</sup> This is Stockenstrom's version. Dr. Theal says it is disproved, and was based on "idle tales of some Hottentots," adding the insinuation that Stockenstrom knew it was untrue. As a matter of fact, Stockenstrom's belief was based on the evidence of Dutch, Hottentot, and Kafir eye-witnesses, who all told the same story, a circumstantial story, which they could not possibly have united to concoct.

## MORE KAFIR WARS

ing homesteads dotted the landscape in all directions, and nothing remained of the flourishing district of Albany but the town of Grahamstown crowded with panic-stricken fugitives. In the words of an eye-witness, the Kafirs had come with an irresistible rush, "carrying with them fire, sword, devastation, and cold-blooded murder, and spoiling the fertile estates and farms like a mountain avalanche."

Now at this time, fortunately for the colony, there were two strong men at the head of affairs. One was Sir Benjamin d'Urban, a brilliant soldier, and a good man. Like Donkin, he had fought for his country all over the world, and in the Peninsula alone he had taken part in nine pitched battles and sieges. He was one of the best staff-officers of his day, and a master in all the arts of war. Under him was Colonel Harry Smith, another veteran of the Peninsula, and one of the most dashing soldiers that ever carried a sword. He had been in almost every fight from Corunna to Waterloo, and he enjoyed them all. He had helped to lead the storm of Badajoz, and was very nearly bayoneted by his own men for attempting to throw down the ladders so that the remainder should not get out of the ditch, where nearly all the men lay dead. During the sack two Spanish ladies threw themselves upon the mercy of Smith and his friend Kincaid. Blood trickled down their necks where their earrings had been wrenched through the flesh by the soldiers. One of them was a girl of thirteen: "A being more transcendently lovely I had never before seen—one more amiable I have never yet known," says Kincaid; "to look at her was to love her; and I did love her, but I never told my love, and in the meantime another and a more impudent fellow stepped in and won her." The "more impudent fellow" was Harry Smith, who speaks of her in his characteristic way as "one with a sense of honour no knight ever exceeded in the most romantic days of

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chivalry, an understanding superior to her years, a masculine mind with a force of character no consideration could turn from her own just sense of rectitude, and all encased in a frame of Nature's fairest and most delicate moulding; the figure of an angel, with an eye of light and an expression which then inspired me with a maddening love, which from that period to this (now thirty-three years) has never abated under many and the most trying circumstances." This soldier's wife, like the other less fortunate who gave her name to Port Elizabeth, is immortalised in one of South Africa's towns—Ladysmith.

When d'Urban heard the news of the outbreak he gave Colonel Smith the command of the frontier, offering him a sloop of war to take him to Algoa Bay. But this was much too tame for Smith, who laid posts to ride the six hundred miles from Cape Town to Grahamstown. It was a famous ride. His orders and warrants were sewn in his jacket by his wife. The first day he went 90 miles, "the heat raging like a furnace." He was in Swellendam to breakfast the next day, though he had "two heavy lazy brutes of horses." After breakfast he did 70 miles, 30 of them in two hours and twenty minutes. On the third day he rode a hundred miles into George, and on the fourth day he was off before daylight over mountain and valley. He met the Grahamstown mails on the way, and reading how terrible the position was he resolved to reach the place a day before he had planned, for it was to have been a seven days' ride. On he went; it was the height of summer, and the weather blazing hot. He had crossed mountain upon mountain by villainous roads. One river, so tortuous was its bed, he forded seven times.

Fifty miles from Uitenhage his horse gave out, "and no belabouring would make him move." Half a mile off was a Boer with his family, his herds and his flocks, fleeing from the invasion. Smith went up to



## MORE KAFIR WARS

him, told him who he was, and asked for assistance. "To my astonishment," says Smith (for nothing can exceed the kindness and hospitality of the Dutch Boers on ordinary occasions), "he first started a difficulty, and then positively refused, which soon set my blood boiling. He was holding a nice-looking horse all ready saddled, so I knocked him down, though half again as big as myself, jumped on his horse, and rode off. I then had a large river to cross by ferry, and horses were waiting for me. The Boer came up, and was very civil, making all sorts of apologies, saying, until he spoke to the *guide* who *followed* me, he did not believe that in that lone condition I could be the officer I represented myself." That night he reached Uitenhage, where he had to sit through an official dinner, and afterwards talk over frontier matters with Colonel Cuyler, now an old retired officer.

Then off next day for Grahamstown, suffering untold misery from the "wretched brutes of knocked-up horses laid for me." On his way he found the country in the wildest state of alarm, families, with their herds and flocks, "fleeing like the Israelites." But the last ten miles was luxury. "I found awaiting me a neat clipping little hack of Colonel Somerset's (such as he is celebrated for) and an escort of six Cape Mounted Rifles. I shall never forget the luxury of getting on this little horse—a positive redemption from an abject state of misery and labour. In ten minutes I was perfectly revived, and in forty minutes was close to the barrier of Grahamstown, fresh enough to have fought a general action, after a ride of 600 miles in six days over mountainous and execrable roads, on Dutch horses living in the fields without a grain of corn. I performed each day's work at the rate of fourteen miles an hour, and I had not the slightest scratch even on my skin."

It was a great ride; but the rider had not arrived a

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moment too soon. We must remember that many of the settlers were peasants and mechanics who had never seen bloodshed, and knew nothing of Kafir warfare, except from the dreadful stories of torture and massacre they had heard. They were now going about with pale faces, loaded with guns, pistols, and swords. They had thrown up barricades in all directions; they had appointed a "committee of safety," and "such was the consternation, an alarm, in the dark especially, would have set one-half of the people shooting the other."

Smith found that he had a regular force of 700 soldiers, besides 850 armed civilians, and that 200 burghers of Graaff Reinet and the 72nd regiment were approaching. He determined to take the offensive and strike at the heart of the enemy's country.

But first of all he had to restore confidence. He summoned a meeting. It was attended by a number of leading settlers, and when the colonel asked them the cause of some delay in executing his orders, one of them stood up and began to enter into argument and discussion. "I exclaimed," says Smith, "in a voice of thunder, 'I am not sent here to argue, but to command. You are now under martial law, and the first gentleman, I care not who he may be, who does not promptly and implicitly obey my command, he shall not even dare to give an opinion; I shall try him by court-martial and punish him in five minutes.'"

This was enough. The colonists recognised a leader. "Men moved like men, and felt that their safety consisted in energetic obedience." The barricades were thrown down, the forces organised, communication reopened with Port Elizabeth, a raid was made upon one of the chief kraals of the enemy, seven missionaries with their families were rescued from the very heart of Kafirland, where they had waited trembling for the moment when their throats were to be cut; and the Kafirs in alarm began to fall back on their own country.

## MORE KAFIR WARS

Then Sir Benjamin d'Urban arrived with reinforcements, and assumed the command, Smith from that time acting as chief of his staff. In this capacity he organised two corps of Hottentots who did splendid work, and also a corps of Guides, the pick of the settlers, under that great colonist, Charles Southey, then a young man.

With his light force of Hottentots and Guides, Smith raided the enemy in every direction, striking like lightning here, there, and everywhere, and marching incredible distances. The Kafirs were bewildered, and fled after a brief resistance, while their cattle and those they had plundered were carried back in triumph. Then the Governor determined to attack the great chief Hintza, who, despite the fact that he owed his life and position to the British Government, was at the back of the hostilities.

At first this truculent savage treated the Governor's messages with contempt; but Smith made several tremendous marches, captured 14,000 cattle, principally the property of the colonists, and burnt the chief's kraal. This brought Hintza to reason, and with fifty followers he came in to make peace. The conditions were the restitution of the cattle stolen, and redress for all grievances. Hintza agreed and peace was declared.

But the wily Kafir was only trying to gain time. He pretended to send messengers to collect the cattle; but no cattle arrived. Then he offered to go and get them himself; but Smith knew better than to let him out of his sight. He even tried to murder the colonel by means of an assassin; but the attempt was foiled. So, at last, he asked his captor to go with him and take troops, while he, himself, would collect the cattle.

Harry Smith agreed, though the Governor was against it, knowing very well that Hintza was playing false. But before the Colonel started he made Hintza the following little speech:—

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“Hintza, you have lived with me now nine days; you call yourself my son, and you say you are sensible of my kindness. Now I am responsible to my King and to my Governor for your safe custody. Clearly understand that you have requested that the troops under my command should accompany you to enable you to fulfil the treaty of peace you have entered into. You voluntarily placed yourself in our hands as a hostage; you are however to look upon me as having full power over you, and if you attempt to escape you will assuredly be shot. I consider my nation at peace with yours, and I shall not molest your subjects provided they are peaceable. When they bring the cattle according to your command, I shall select the bullocks and return the cows and calves to them.”

To all this Hintza consented, and so they rode away. The chief, who carried his assegais, was mounted on a fine horse, and George Southey and fifteen men of the Guides were his guard. Thus they went for two days; but on the third Hintza got his chance. It was on the farther bank of the river Xabecca. The bank was steep and thickly wooded. Suddenly Hintza made a dash; but he got entangled in the thicket and had to stop. Smith drew his pistol; but the chief smiled so ingenuously that the other began to regret his suspicions.

And so they went to the top of the ridge, ahead of the troops. At the summit the colonel turned round to watch his soldiers come up, and seizing the chance, like a flash Hintza burst from his guard and was away again. He was two hundred yards distant before Smith realised what had taken place, and then the colonel clapped spurs to his horse in pursuit.

Hintza was riding one of Somerset's best horses; but Smith was on an animal of the finest English blood. At first the chief kept his distance; but blood tells in a long race, and the colonel gradually drew closer to the fugitive. On they galloped. They had now gone nearly a

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mile. In front was a Kafir village ; on the right was the bed of the river full of Kafirs waiting to receive their chief. But Smith drew in between Hintza and the river bank, and closing with him, struck at him with the butt-end of his pistol. It flew out of his hand, Hintza, meanwhile, jobbing at him furiously with an assegai.

And then, says Colonel Smith, " I was now rapidly approaching the Kafir huts, and the blood of my horse gave me great advantage over Hintza. I tried to seize his bridle-reins, but he parried my attempt with his assegai. I prayed him to stop, but he was in a state of frenzy. At this point of desperation, a whisper came into my ear, ' Pull him off his horse ! ' I shall not, nor ever could, forget the peculiarity of this whisper. No time was to be lost. I immediately rode so close to him that his assegai was comparatively harmless, and seizing him by the collar of his karosse (or tiger-skin cloak), I found I could shake him in his seat. I made a desperate effort by urging my horse to pass him, and I hurled him to the ground."

Smith had lost control over his horse and was now borne towards the village, expecting every moment to have a hundred assegais thrown at him ; but, fortunately, the Kafirs had fled into the river. With both hands the rider hauled his beast's head round and drove him into a hut. This stopped him for a moment, and then back the horse went towards the chief.

George Southey was by this time within gunshot, and Hintza was running for the thicket on the bank.

" Fire, fire at him ! " shouted the colonel.

Southey fired, and the chief fell.

He was on his legs again in a moment and gained the bush, Southey after him. The young guide lost him for a time in the thicket ; but as Southey was climbing up a cliff in his search an assegai whirled past his head. Turning round he found himself face to face with a Kafir who was raising another assegai to stab

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him. Southey was so close that he had to recoil to bring up his gun. He fired and Hintza fell.

Smith laid the body, reverently covered, in the village, and then began to consider his position. He was surrounded by thousands of savages thirsting for revenge. Safety lay in speed, and Smith acted like lightning. He made a rapid march, captured three thousand cattle, then rescued a thousand Fingos who were in danger of being massacred, and by extraordinary skill kept the savages at bay all the time. They tried night attacks, but he drove them back. "In all my previous service," he says, "I was never placed in a position requiring more cool determination and skill, and as one viewed the handful of my people compared with the thousands of brawny savages all round us, screeching their war-cry, calling to their cattle, and indicating by gesticulations the pleasure they would have in cutting our throats, the scene was animating to a degree."

But Smith came out of it safely with the loss only of Major White, who had rashly exposed himself, and six men. He had marched in seven days 218 miles, through terrible country in the face of hordes of Kafirs, and he had brought into safety 3000 cattle and 1000 fugitives. At last the war came to an end: the Kafirs, after their first triumphant invasion, had only struck one successful blow, the massacre of Bailie and his detachment of Hottentots. The details of that tragic fight no one will ever know; but it was no doubt similar to the massacre of Wilson and his party long afterwards by the Matabele. Certain it is that Bailie and his twenty-eight brave Hottentots fought till their last shot was spent, and then fell pierced through by assegais.

Hintza's son Kreli was made chief in his father's place, and the country between the Kei and the Keiskamma was annexed under the name of the Province of Adelaide, with its capital at King William's Town,

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and fifteen thousand Fingos, rescued from the tender mercies of the Kafirs, were settled upon it. Smith was given command of the Frontier Province, and charge of a hundred thousand barbarians. He was just the man for the work. He was frank and honest and just. He talked to the natives in parables and in a sign language which they could understand. To show his power he blew up an ox-wagon; to confound the rain-makers he threw a glass of water on the ground and asked them to put it in the glass again. He adopted some of the native customs and laws, and organised a force of native police and native newsmongers, who ran through the land with his daily court circular. His system seemed to work well; but how it would have fared in the long run will ever be matter of dispute, for it was brought to an untimely end.

It happened in this way. A party in England and South Africa, composed of good people, and politicians, missionaries, friends of the slaves, and a sprinkling of that peculiar class which thinks its own countrymen must always be wrong, had been agitating for some time about the oppression of the black man. They were sometimes excellent people but usually they did not take a very broad view of things. They heard that black men were often beaten and occasionally killed, and therefore they thought that all white men in the colony were cruel tyrants and all black men were oppressed innocents. It was just as if a Chinaman were to read about the wife-beating and drunkenness which goes on in English slums, and argue therefrom that Englishmen as a rule were Bluebeards and sots. That there were cases of cruelty and murder and robbery in the colony I have clearly shown. Any historian who says there were none is simply flying in the face of the evidence. When two peoples like the Kafirs and the European settlers are fighting for a piece of land which, strictly speaking, belongs to

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neither, it stands to reason that there will be some heads broken. So it is all through history: when the Normans were fighting the Saxons for England, or when the Australians were edging out the black fellows, or the New Zealand settlers were fighting the Maoris, or when the American colonists were fighting the Red Indians. So it is all through Nature: when the brown rat is fighting the black rat, for example. It is a law in life that the more advanced race shall dispossess the less advanced.

In this case, then, there was a pressure of the white man on the black just as a big man elbows a small man in a crowd. The black man resented it and ran his knife into the white man's ribs, and then there was trouble. It was all inevitable, as the people at home would have known if they had read their histories, and they should have tried to soften the process and prevent friction as much as possible, always remembering that, after all, the white man was their brother and a reasoning being, while the black man was a savage who did not usually reason at all. Instead of doing this, the party I have spoken of called the white settlers a pack of murderers and robbers, and held that the Kafir was always right. Even when the missionaries who lived among the Kafirs ventured to tell the truth about them, their friends at home were angry and began to insinuate that these missionaries were in league with the settlers.

Now Lord Glenelg, who was Secretary of the Colonies, was one of this party, and he got it into his head that the black man could do no wrong and the white man no right—at least in South Africa. He was thus in a very peculiar position. His predecessor had placed five thousand of the King's subjects in a place in which they were almost bound to come to blows with the Kafir. Lord Glenelg was thus in a measure responsible for their safety. Yet when the Kafirs invaded the settlement, murdered about forty of the settlers, and



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burned nearly all their farms, Lord Glenelg only told the Englishmen that it served them right, and would not even allow them to hit back. It was just as if a lawyer who was also a temperance advocate should try to ruin a brewery of which he was a trustee because he thought beer was bad for people.

Lord Glenelg wrote to Sir Benjamin d'Urban that "the Kafirs had ample justification of the late war," and the claim of sovereignty over the new province bounded by the Keiskamma and the Kei must be renounced. The killing of Hintza was described as a cruel murder; Sir Benjamin d'Urban's whole policy was condemned as wicked, and Colonel Harry Smith was superseded.

Even if all that Lord Glenelg believed were true, it would still have been the height of impolicy to upset everything in this bull-in-a-china-shop manner. As it was, it filled the British settlers with boiling indignation, it disgusted the Boers, and it made the Kafirs more truculent than ever. Poor Sir Benjamin d'Urban felt most of his prestige gone; Harry Smith had to clear himself of what almost amounted to a charge of murder, for which Southey was actually tried; and a Lieutenant-Governor was placed at the frontier to carry out a policy that was exactly the opposite of everything the Governor had done. The result was inevitable. Sir Benjamin, despite his courtesy and patience and desire to work with Lord Glenelg and his new lieutenant for the good of the country, found the situation impossible. He was dismissed, and Sir George Napier sent out in his stead.

Fortunately for the country, the man Lord Glenelg had chosen to succeed Smith knew a great deal more of the real situation than did Lord Glenelg. This was our old friend Captain Andries Stockenstrom, the son of the Landdrost who had been murdered at Slachter's Nek and the magistrate who had helped so energetically to suppress the Slachter's Nek Rebellion and who had afterwards been Commissioner-General of the Frontier.

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His virtues and his faults are well known. He was a strong man and a just; but he was also an autocrat, impatient of control and sharp of temper and of tongue. He knew that there were occasional and serious acts of injustice against the Kafir; but he also knew that the Kafir was a dangerous and treacherous savage, with a nasty little habit of assegaing unoffending people and running off with their cattle. He had often himself been out on commando and helped to shoot Kafirs in many a raid after stolen cattle. He had done things at which the good Lord Glenelg would have turned white and trembled. But he had had a quarrel with Colonel Somerset in which he was very likely right and the colonel wrong. He had thrown up his work and gone to Europe, and there told his story to such good purpose that Lord Glenelg had made him Lieutenant-Governor instead of Colonel Smith.

Stockenstrom was a hard hitter and a good fighter; but he found he had enough to do when he got out to South Africa. True, Sir Benjamin d'Urban received him kindly and courteously, and Harry Smith helped him like a comrade in arms. But the Eastern Province settlers looked upon him as a traitor to their cause. They had been called robbers and murderers, and Stockenstrom was hand-in-glove with their accusers. Then the Boers had grown alarmed with the progress of events and were more bent than ever upon trekking out of the country, while the Kafirs and Fingos were robbing one another and the settlers.

Still Stockenstrom went doggedly to work; restored as well as he could the old order of things, withdrew most of the new military posts, and generally adopted what has been called Lord Glenelg's system, though some of its provisions would have set that nobleman's hair on end. Stockenstrom found that the colonists were afraid to defend even their own cattle, so cowed were they by the accusations of the pro-native party

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and the Government's protection of the Kafir. He therefore framed an ordinance which allowed colonists to shoot armed marauders ; in fact, he made private war legal—a law which the friend of the black man might call the legalisation of murder. Still, it was the only way. It was the custom of the border, and all the human institutions in the world could not prevent the practice or suggest any other plan.

Now a great deal has been said about the change from the d'Urban system to the Glenelg system. As a matter of fact neither of these statesmen had created anything that could be called a system. The one had not time ; the other never got full obedience. Nor did it matter. The situation was there and no system could change it. The white man was face to face with the black ; both wanted land and cattle and both were armed in a great, new, wild country. Therefore they fought. And they fought for years and years—sometimes in small parties and sometimes in big. Sometimes the white men were put to flight and sometimes the black. Sometimes there was a massacre on the one side and sometimes on the other. Sometimes the military acted alone, sometimes in co-operation with the burghers and the British settlers. There were a hundred stirring fights that might be mentioned, enough to fill a dozen books. There was the military disaster at Burn's Hill. There was Stockenstrom's Raid on the Amatola. There was the Glencoe massacre at the village of Auckland, where the veterans of the 91st had settled with their wives and children. On Christmas Day of 1850 the Kafirs came into the village and asked for food and shelter. The good people gave them some of the Christmas dinner, and while in the very act of sharing it, the savages rose and killed nearly every man in the village. There, and at two other military villages, nearly fifty settlers were murdered by treachery. Some of the boys escaped by dressing as girls, for the

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Kafirs often spared the women, though they were sometimes speared also. There was the great fight of the Boomah Pass where Smith, then Sir Harry Smith and Governor of the colony, fought his way through a narrow gorge with the loss of fifty men killed and wounded. In such wild scenes the Eastern Province was welded together, and in such desperate struggles the settler became a strong frontiersman, quick and self-reliant, ready with axe as with rifle, and rising buoyant above every misfortune.

But we must hurry on to the great disaster which for ever broke the strength of the Kafir nations. It is one of the most astonishing stories in all history, the story of a great people committing suicide in one tremendous act of self-destruction. It happened when England was fighting Russia in the Crimea, when rumours of the war were filtering through to the Kafir chiefs and were causing them to think that the time had arrived to shake off the yoke of the white man, though how much the movement was a conspiracy among the chiefs and how much the result of superstition will never be known.

Sir George Cathcart after the terrible wars of a few years before had driven the Kafirs out of the Amatola Mountains into the country between the Keiskamma and the Kei. When their cattle lowed they would say, "Listen how our cattle yearn for the mountain-grass of the Amatola."

Kreli, the great chief, had a soothsayer of renown called Mhlakaza, and Mhlakaza's daughter Mongquase was held to have the gift of prophecy. She told the Galekas that she had converse with the chiefs and heroes of old time, Ndlambe, Hintza, Mdushane, Gaika and Eno, who were resolved to save the people from their evil fate. They would rise from the dead and would be joined by the Russians (who were also black men) and together they would drive the white men into

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the sea. But as a pledge of their belief, the Kafir people must destroy all their cattle and all their grain, and the land must not be tilled. Then glorious herds of wide-horned oxen would arise from the earth; the grain pits would be refilled to the brim; the arms and cattle of the white men would fall to the Kafir; the dead would live again, and the living would put on immortality. Then the pastures of the Amatola would be regained and all would live happily for ever and ever.

The word went forth through the tribes, and marvels were seen that showed the word must be true. Strange warriors, who could be no other than Russians, appeared at nightfall; the horns of beautiful oxen were spied peeping through the rushes of the swampy pools; the lowing of cattle was heard rising from subterranean caverns; the heroes of old time were seen on foot and on horseback marching in endless legions across the waves of the Indian Ocean.

Then the cattle-slaying began. There were great feasts and rejoicings; but the cattle fell faster and faster, until there were too many to eat. The dogs could not eat them, nor the jackals, nor the hyænas, nor the vultures that gathered in clouds. The evil savour of thousands of decaying carcasses filled the air, mingling with the smoke of the burning grain. Never had there been such a destruction; no less than two hundred thousand cattle were killed to fulfil the words of the prophet.

Mr. Charles Brownlee, who was the Gaika Commissioner, has told us how he fought this movement. It was a terrible struggle between one white man and a host of chiefs and witch-doctors. He rode day after day through the length and breadth of his territory, warning, exhorting, scolding, and entreating. To all their stories of future happenings he would reply, "*Napakade! Napakade!*" ("Never! Never!") so that his name was changed among the natives, and ever after he was known as Napakade.

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The chief of the Gaikas, Sandile, was a weak and wavering man. For a time Brownlee restrained him, and he only killed a few cattle; the commissioner kept the chief's kraal close to his house; but at last the other chiefs and witch-doctors sent Sandile such terrible messages that he fled to his old kraal and slew his cattle. Brownlee went after him, and argued with him and with his evil counsellors. They told him not to trouble them. "It is not for you I feel," he replied, "but for the helpless women and children who in a few days will be starving." Then Brownlee sat down on the ground and wept, for he felt he had lost the battle. And the cattle-killers cried, "Lo, he weeps, he sees the destruction of the white man is at hand."

But Brownlee did not altogether fail, for some of the chiefs took his advice and refused to kill their cattle. Thus families were divided, brother against brother, father against son. The whole Kafir people were split into two parties, the Amagogotya, who wanted to keep their cattle, and the Tambas, who wanted to kill them. The Tambas, not content with killing their own cattle, tried to slaughter those of the other party, and broils and bloodshed were the result. The whole of Kafirland was in an uproar; but the Tambas being the stronger, there was a great migration of the Amagogotya into the colony. They came in crowds, all carrying sacks of grain upon their heads—even the little children had their bundles—and they drove their flocks and herds in front of them.

At last came the great day when there was to be darkness, thunder, rain and a mighty wind, and the white men were to be turned into frogs and mice and swept into the sea. The Kafirs decked themselves out in their paint and beads and copper rings and confidently waited for the miracles. But none came. The sun rose in a cloudless sky, and made his journey just as usual. The heavens did not rush to meet the earth as the

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prophetess had said they would. Nature went on its old way, the sun sank, and the serene moon came out, heedless of the white eyes that watched her for the portents of doom.

And then a great sound of lamentation went up from all Kafirland. There was no food; no cattle came out of the earth; no grain appeared in the pits. Every day the people went to the kraals and granaries to look, and every day they were faced with the same emptiness. Some of them at last fell into their grain-pits and died; others wandered into the bush to search for roots, and fell through weakness to rise no more.

And now a throng of starving people began to cross the border. They came in thousands, old and young, from the feeble, withered crone to the child who could barely walk. The sick arose from their beds and tottered after them. The roads were strewn with corpses. The colonists along the border did what they could to help. Sir George Grey, who was then Governor, provided food at various places. Brownlee, who had bought a great store of corn for almost nothing when the natives were throwing it away, now opened his granaries and saved countless lives. But in spite of all that could be done, at least twenty-five thousand Kafirs perished from starvation.

Thus the power of the Kafir nations was broken; great tracts of their land were left desolate and were taken up by colonial farmers.

Twenty years after another war took place; Kreli and Sandile together made their last fight with the white man. They were beaten and Sandile was killed. And nowadays the Kafir is a peaceful farmer; tilling his land with a plough bought at the store, or travelling to Cape Town or Kimberley in a third-class carriage to work at the docks or in the mines. There is peace between white man and black after wars that covered three-quarters of a century.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE GREAT TREK

AND now we must go back again to the time of Glenelg and Sir Benjamin d'Urban in order to give an account of how the other states of South Africa came into being. For over three centuries the story of South Africa has been the story of the Portuguese on the east coast and of the British and Dutch in Cape Colony. Looking through the records and the old books of travel we find occasional expeditions north of the Orange, and there are also little independent settlements, chiefly of English adventurers or shipwrecked sailors on the coast of Natal, but that is all. The real history of European settlement in Natal and north of the Orange dates from the second quarter of last century.

There has been a great deal of ink spilt over the causes of the emigrations into the wilderness known as the Great Trek. By some the trekking Boers have been described as heroes, who left everything they valued for the sake of freedom from injustice and oppression; by others they are described as themselves tyrants who fled because they were not allowed to enslave and murder the black races. It is at least safe to say that neither view is right.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "I might indeed have soothed Retief and his associates with the promise that the slaves should not be free; that the 50th Ordinance should be repealed; that Kaffraria should be divided among the Colonists, the missionaries hanged, and the blacks extirpated. I should most likely have been overwhelmed with



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The causes, like most human motives, were mixed. The chief, no doubt, was land-hunger. The colonists were multiplying rapidly, and each of them required a farm of at least five thousand acres—usually more. They found a solid Kafir wall blocking their way to the east, with a wedge of British settlers making things still tighter. Then there was the protection given by the British magistrates to Hottentot servants, as we have seen in the case of the Slachter's Nek rebellion. There was also the protection of the Kafirs and their raids upon the farmers. There was the commando system. There was Glenelg's folly. There was the liberation of the slaves. There was the abolition of the Heemraden. There were faults of local government. There were also wild stories: the Boers were to be turned into Roman Catholics, they were to be made to serve in English regiments and ships of war. There was the desire to be free of it all; to be on the open veld where there was no one to worry or interfere. There were a hundred and one reasons.

And so with the people who went. Some were good and some were bad. Some were fugitives from justice like Trieckard. Some were wild caterans of the same breed as the Bezuidenhouts, up to any mischief; and some were very decent, respectable, God-fearing burghers, who only wanted pasture and peace and freedom from interference.

So they trekked, in small parties and in great, some with a few wagons, some with hundreds, and great herds of cattle that covered the whole landscape. They went north, over the Orange River to the west of Basutoland, ever north until they reached the Vaal, and some went north of that, far north almost to the Limpopo. Hundreds of miles they travelled, with their flocks and herds,

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flattering addresses in return, but emigration would not have been checked for all that."—Despatch of Captain Stockenstrom to Sir Benjamin d'Urban (Grahamstown, May 25, 1837).

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like Arabs or the Israelites of old, going only a few miles a day and staying long where there was good grass. It was a pleasant life, with their wealth about them, their great gipsy wagons to live in, the blue sky above them, and the rolling veld on every side.

One party of about fifty under Jan van Rensburg got into the Zoutpansberg, and nothing certain was ever heard of them again, though it is believed that they were murdered by the natives. Another party under Trieckard—a brave pioneer—actually descended from the Zoutpansberg down the steep mountain terraces that fringe the great central plateau to the sea at Lourenço Marques, their object being to open communication with a port. Only a few escaped from the fever-stricken swamps of the low country to tell their story.<sup>1</sup>

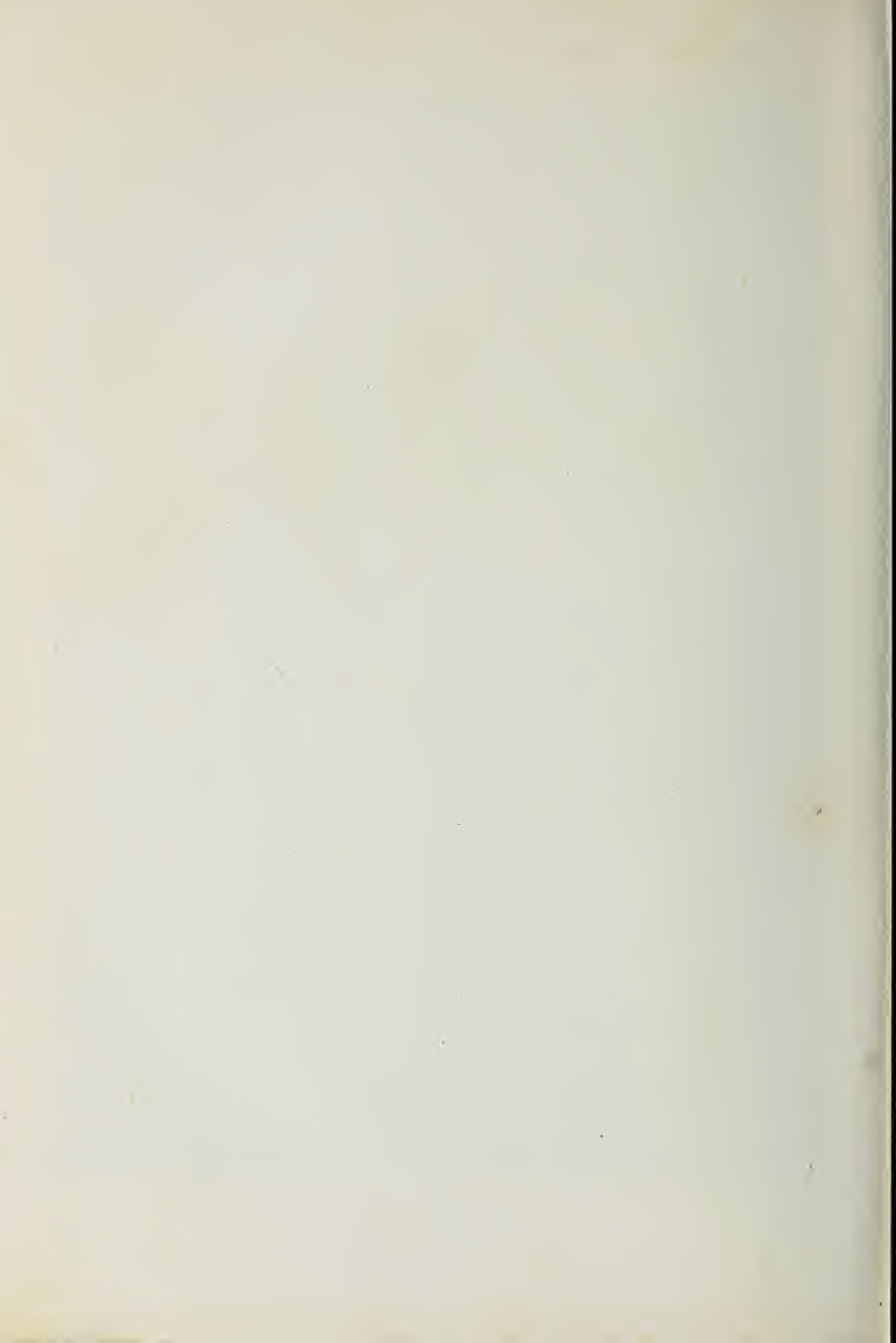
Wave after wave of the emigrant farmers swept north. Game was plentiful, grass was good, but of natives there were strangely few. The country was under the sway of a branch of the Zulu nation, one of the most destructive powers the earth has ever known, comparable only to the Mongol hordes that swept over Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages. The farmers who had spread over the veld in fancied security soon came in contact with this terrible power. Many were murdered and a large part of their cattle stolen before they could defend themselves. And then began such a war as had never before been seen in Africa. The Boers were few, the Matabele many. Moselekatse, the great chief, had, after the custom of his people, organised all his fighting men into regiments of a thousand or so strong. They were magnificent fighters, strong, athletic, brave. With their long oxhide shields and heavy iron-headed assegais, they charged in close order

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<sup>1</sup> Those who would like to know something of the kind of country these pioneers went through, and the hardships they must have suffered, should read Sir Percy Fitzpatrick's fascinating book, *Jock of the Bushveld*.



The Women Loaded the Empty Guns



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like a Roman phalanx, and hitherto they had swept down all their enemies like grass.

But the Boers had three advantages: their guns, their horses, and their wagons. When they met the Matebele in the open, they rode up to within range, fired a volley, and rode away again to reload, and then repeated their tactics. The savages yelled and hurled their spears, but never could get near the enemy, and were as helpless as a flock of sheep. On the other hand, if they attacked a Boer encampment, they found the wagons lashed together in a circle with branches of thorny mimosa twisted through the wheels. As they charged the Boers fired at them from their wagons, every shot taking effect in the dense masses, while the women loaded the empty guns behind their husbands. Even if the warriors reached the wagons, it was only to be shot down while making a vain attempt to break through, and their only chance of doing mischief was to throw their assegais blindly into the centre of the circle. Thus Moselekatse, the great chief of the Matabele, and his captains, were defeated in several battles, and at last fled, never stopping until he reached the country north of the Limpopo, henceforward called Matabeleland. The Boers were left in possession of a vast country which their enemies had swept almost bare of inhabitants.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### NATAL AND THE ZULUS

NATAL, as we know, was given its name by Vasco da Gama from the fact that his ships passed its shores on Christmas day. But from that day on for over three hundred years the only white men who landed on its soil were an occasional slave-trader or ivory-hunter, or sailors driven thither by the dreadful circumstance of shipwreck. We have many pitiful tales of such castaways forcing a path through the swamps or over the mountains to Delagoa Bay, some even making for the Cape, and usually perishing from hunger or thirst or by the savagery of the natives. There was, to take only one case, the wreck of the *Stavenisse* in 1687, when the crew might have died of starvation were it not that several English sailors, wrecked some time before, came to their aid with beads by means of which they purchased food from the natives. How some of them made a vessel and sailed to Table Bay is like a chapter of *Robinson Crusoe*. "John Kingston, the Englishman, made a saw out of the ring of the 'luijk.' We made one trip to the wreck, and picked whatever would serve our purposes; we found three anchors among the rocks, or thrown up on the beach, among them our best bower, with the piece of the cable to which the ship had ridden. We broke the shank in two; one part served for an anvil; the rest, with the arms

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and ring, were beaten into nails and bolts." Many sailors were murdered owing to the belief of the natives that (as Henry Fynn tells us) "white men were not human beings, but a production of the sea, which they traversed in large shells, coming near the shore in stormy weather, their food being the tusks of elephants which they would take from the beach if laid there for them, and placing beads in their room which they obtained from the bottom of the sea."

But the English are an adventurous race, and nowhere has their daring spirit been better shown than in the early history of Natal. The fate of Dr. Cowan and Lieutenant Donovan, who perished in an attempt to cross Natal into Portuguese territory, did not deter others. The ivory trade was the great temptation, and in 1823 a company was formed in Cape Town for the purpose of developing it. Thus began a precarious settlement of British adventurers on the spot where the town of Durban now stands. They were brave men—some of them might be called great men. The story of the hardships and dangers through which they passed, their shipwrecks at sea and their battles on land, would take a volume to itself. Even this brief account, from which by far the greater part of their doings must be omitted, will serve to show the extraordinary and perilous enterprises which formed the routine of their daily lives.

The chief among them were James Saunders King and Francis George Farewell, who had both been naval officers; the Fynn family—four in all, a father and three sons—of whom two afterwards became famous in Kafirland; Nathaniel Isaacs, an English Jew related to the Solomon family of St. Helena and then of Cape Town, who has written a fascinating account of his adventures; Captain Allen Gardiner of the Royal Navy, the missionary who afterwards died in Patagonia; John Cane, Thomas Holstead, and George

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Biggar. There were others; but these are perhaps the best known.

What these men did between them passes belief. They built a ship; they became chiefs of tribes; they led native armies; they held their own against the Zulus; they led embassies to the Cape from Chaka; they obtained charters from Dingaan; they were doctors, elephant-hunters, soldiers, diplomatists; they petitioned to be made a colony with a Governor and a House of Representatives; they became protectors of broken tribes; they built houses and founded the town of Durban which they called after the Governor of the Cape. They were, in short, men of their hands who could rise to the height of any adventure.

When they entered Natal, they found one of the most extraordinary despotisms that has ever arisen in Africa. Chaka was the great chief of the Zulus. He had built up a nation of warriors, and made himself supreme over vast territories. The male part of the population was divided into veterans, younger soldiers, and *amabutu*, lads who had not served in war. These were distinguished by the colour of their long shields of oxhide, white, black, and red, and the higher orders wore black rings of reeds, bound with sinews and varnished with black beeswax, which were sewn upon their heads. Isaacs saw together seventeen regiments of warriors with black shields, and twelve regiments with white shields, which, he calculated, amounted to thirty thousand men in all; and Chaka assured him that this force was not half the army. They were armed with only one heavy stabbing assegai, to lose which was death, and their method of attack, devised by Chaka himself, who discarded the throwing assegais, was to charge in dense masses covered by their great shields and thrust when they got to close quarters. Thus they devastated the whole of the south-eastern corner of Africa, leaving the country almost bare of inhabitants.



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Fynn, who went with Chaka on one of his campaigns, describes the destruction of the Endwandwe tribe. They had collected all their cattle and their women and children on a rocky height and sat round them waiting for the Zulus to attack. Chaka's forces marched slowly and with much caution in regiments, each regiment divided into companies, till within twenty yards of the enemy, when they made a halt. After hissing and exchanging challenges, "both parties, with a tumultuous yell, clashed together, and continued stabbing each other for about three minutes, when both fell back a few paces. Seeing their losses about equal, both armies raised a cry, and this was followed by another rush, and they continued closely engaged about twice as long as in the first onset, when both parties again drew off. But the enemy's loss had now been the most severe. This urged the Zulus to a final charge. The shrieks became terrific. The remnant of the enemy's army sought shelter in an adjoining wood, out of which they were soon driven. Then began a slaughter of the women and children. They were all put to death. . . The battle, from the commencement to the close, did not last more than an hour and a half. The number of the hostile tribe, including women and children, could not have been less than forty thousand. The number of cattle taken was estimated at sixty thousand."

After a fight like this all the "cowards" were put to death. Every regiment had to sacrifice some, or its leaders would have been accused of protecting their men. If a regiment were defeated it was massacred *en masse*.

But the slaughter did not end in the field. Every day Chaka made a sign and a dozen or so of his courtiers or wives were dragged to the hill of execution and beaten to death. Once, it is said, the crying of a child annoyed him, and he slew not only the child itself but all the other innocents, amounting to fifteen or twenty, among whom it took refuge. On another occasion he

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murdered all the old men, saying that "they were of no use as they could not fight." Isaacs gives an account of how on one day he killed one hundred and seventy girls and boys. "He began by taking out several fine lads and ordering their own brothers to twist their necks, their bodies were afterwards dragged away and beaten with sticks until life was extinct. After this refined act of monstrous cruelty, the remainder of the victims in the kraal were indiscriminately butchered." If a father shed tears as he was killing his son, he was killed too, for moral disobedience. On one day Chaka killed nine of his wives because they made remarks which displeased him. The Hill of Execution was white with the bones of his victims, and great troops of jackals and wolves always waited round the place for the food they knew was sure to come.

But the greatest massacre of all was when Chaka's mother died. Fynn, who was an eye-witness, describes the scene in a passage of appalling horror. The Zulus were in a panic to be the first to show their grief, for they knew that a general slaughter was sure to follow, and those would be chosen who had the least appearance of sorrow. They tore from their bodies every description of ornament, and the fifteen thousand people in the kraal set up the most dismal and horrid yells. Those who could not force natural tears from their eyes took snuff copiously. Chaka, himself, who was something of an actor, stood for twenty minutes in full war attire, pensively shedding tears which dropped upon his shield. The people of the neighbouring kraals came pouring in to join the deafening chorus. The mourning went on in growing vigour all through the night, each striving to outdo his neighbour. By morning there were fully sixty thousand people in the town. Forty oxen were slaughtered to the spirits; but no one was allowed to touch meat, and the weaker began to give way to hunger and fatigue. Then at ten o'clock the war song

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began, and every one spurred himself to renewed efforts. All who gave in were cut down. Those who ran to the water to drink were speared as they went. Those who could no longer force tears from their eyes paid the penalty of death. Never was the simulated emotion of the courtier more valuable to those who could practise it. The river was choked with corpses. The ground ran with blood. By three o'clock no less than seven thousand had fallen as a sacrifice to the grief of this pious son; and it was only at ten the next morning that Chaka relented and allowed those who remained alive to rest and refresh themselves. These are only a few of many of Chaka's massacres, in which, it is estimated, at least a million of people were slaughtered.

The tyrant came to an evil end. Two of his brothers, Dingaan and Umhlangana, conspired against his life. They got one of his servants to hold his attention while the other conspirators, stealing up behind him, stabbed him with assegais which they had concealed under their cloaks. Chaka rose and attempted to throw off his kaross. He saw his brothers among the assassins, "What have I done to you, children of my father?" he cried, and with the words he fell at their feet.

Dingaan, whose first act was to kill his brother Umhlangana, was as detestable a monster as Chaka. But he had more guile, and his methods were more treacherous. When he decided on the massacre of a regiment, he would send the executioners by stealth. They would go into the village by twos and threes and mix in a friendly way with the people. Then at a given signal the general slaughter would begin. Captain Gardiner, who stayed with the monarch for some time, gives a good description of this hero. He wore a blue dungaree cloak, relieved by a white border and devices at the back, which, although tarnished, became his height and portly figure. He was inordinately vain, and when he went abroad his people shouted—

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Arise, vulture!

Thou art the bird that eateth other birds.

He dressed his women, ninety in number, in elaborate parti-coloured uniforms of beads, and used to dance with them by the hour, all singing songs of his own composition. He himself was the most active of the band, though his figure "bore the nearest resemblance to Falstaff of any I could recollect." Now and then he would turn to Captain Gardiner and say: "Are we not a jolly people?" To show how jolly he was he would straightway order the death of several of his subjects.

This was the man whom the emigrant Boers had to deal with when they came trekking down the mountains with their wagons into Natal. Piet Retief, a colonist who had got into trouble with Stockenstrom and the Colonial Government, was the leader of the party. He was delighted with the country between the Tugela and the Bushman's River, which the Zulu atrocities had left almost bare of inhabitants, and the little party of British settlers received him with enthusiasm. "The arrival of Mr. Retief and a party of emigrants," says one of them, "was hailed by us as a matter of no small moment. The conviction that we shall, for the future, be permitted to live in peace, and be freed from the constant though idle threats of Dingaan, has infused a lively spirit amongst us." They presented Retief with an address signed by all the residents, a form of courtesy they were much addicted to, and helped him with their knowledge of the language and the country.

Retief bearded the lion in his den, and Dingaan, full of guile, promised him a grant of land if he would recover some stolen cattle from the Chief Sikonyela. This Retief and his friends accomplished, treating Sikonyela, who had been kind to them, rather shabbily. Then Retief returned with the cattle and some sixty men on a state visit to the great kraal, expecting to get a charter of the land he desired.

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Now at this time there were at Dingaan's kraal the Rev. F. Owen, of the Church Missionary Society, who had succeeded Captain Gardiner, with his wife Mrs. Owen, his sister, Miss Owen, and a Welsh servant girl, and also William Wood, who was acting as interpreter to Dingaan.<sup>1</sup>

The journals of the two eye-witnesses make painful reading. Owen had himself been warned by Gardiner that Dingaan was plotting to murder all the white people in Natal; his presence in the kraal was bravery almost amounting to madness. On the 2nd of February (1838) he notes that Dingaan asked him to write a letter of invitation to the settlers, and adds, "The Dutch will be too wise to expose themselves in this manner."

The Dutch were not too wise. The very next morning "when we were at family prayer," the sound of shots was heard and sixty Boers came riding into town with Sikonyela's cattle, firing their guns in salute, making their horses caracole and rushing at one another in sham charges. The Zulus in their turn showed their skill in a great dance of warriors. Dingaan seemed to be in the best of humours. The farmers were thrown wholly off their guard. They left their arms and horses in the custody of their servants (the Hottentot "after-riders" who usually carried their long guns) under two milk trees which grew outside the principal entrance to the town, a circular kraal strongly hedged with bushes. William Wood, the young son of a British settler, scented mischief, although he could not be sure. He watched his opportunity to warn the farmers to be on their guard, and as they strolled past him he whispered his suspicions. But the Dutchmen

<sup>1</sup> In some of the Boer narratives it is said that Dingaan was prompted to the massacre by the missionary or by one of the settlers, who told him they were deserters from their king and ought to be treated as such. The atrocity of this libel prevents belief; but it is clearly disproved by Mr. Wood's and Mr. Owen's journals, as well as by the fact that Halstead and Biggar, two of the English settlers, were among those massacred.

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only smiled and said, "We are sure the king's heart is right with us, and there is no cause for fear."

This was on the morning of the third day, and shortly afterwards Dingaan, who had been whispering with his captains, came out of his hut and seated himself in front in his arm-chair. He ordered out two of his regiments, one composed of veterans with rings on their heads and bearing white shields, the other consisting of young men with black shields. The king formed the two regiments in a great circle, with his two principal captains, Tambuza and Inhlela, on his right and left hands, and then invited Retief and his friends to come and bid him farewell.

Just about this time our good missionary was sitting in the shade of his wagon, near his huts, which were outside the kraal and just opposite the hill of execution, when one of Dingaan's messengers came and told him not to be frightened as the king was going to kill the Boers. Imagine his consternation. What was he to do? He felt it was his duty to warn the Boers, but he knew that a step in their direction meant certain death. He was standing, with his wife and sister and Wood, torn this way and that by the dreadful dilemma, when one of the party cried. "There, they are killing the Boers now!" It was too late.

Retief walked confidently into the doomed circle, a wallet on his back holding the royal charter, and sat by the king, the rest of the farmers and their servants sitting a little way off but also in the circle.

Dingaan was gracious. The farmers, he said, must come and settle in the land he had given them: it was his desire. He then wished them a safe journey, and before they started, he said, they must drink some of his Kafir beer. The beer was brought in and the troops were ordered to amuse the farmers by a song and dance.

Then all of a sudden Dingaan cried:

"Seize them!"

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The circle closed in upon the sitting men with a rush.

"We are done for!" cried Halstead in English, and then added in Zulu to the men he was struggling with: "Let me speak to the king!"

The king heard him but waved away the group with his hand. In despair Halstead drew his knife, ripped up one Zulu and cut another's throat before he was overpowered and dragged away.

One of the Boers also killed his man; but in a few moments the struggle was over. Each man was held by as many Zulus as could get at him, a dozen or so to each man, and they were dragged out with their feet trailing on the ground.

All this time Dingaan was sitting on his throne with his hand stretched out, screaming: "Bulala amatakati! Bulala amatakati!" ("Kill the wizards! Kill the wizards!")

And so the farmers were dragged to the hill of execution which faced the spot on which the little missionary party stood, frozen to the ground by horror. Mr. Owen laid himself on the ground. Young Wood kept standing and saw it all. There was a great multitude on the hill, beating out the brains of the farmers with knobkerries. Retief was forced to watch the slaughter of his friends, and then he himself was killed with accompanying barbarities so atrocious that I leave them undescribed.

So died the brave Piet Retief and his fellow-pioneers.

Then Dingaan and his indunas held a council, and shortly after a great army marched out of the town to attack the camps of the Boers. The farmers were scattered hunting, and when the ten thousand warriors burst upon the little scattered groups of wagons, there were only a few men to guard the women and children. It was a night attack, and the people were taken completely by surprise. The Zulus darted everywhere

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in countless numbers, slaying without mercy. Forty Dutchmen and one Englishman, fifty-six Dutchwomen and one hundred and eighty-five of their children, besides two hundred and fifty of their Hottentot and half-breed servants were killed. To this day the place is called Wienen, which in our language means weeping or lamentation.

We have various accounts of this massacre, and they describe atrocities too abominable to be set down in print. An "affectionate mother and grandmother," Mrs. Steenkamp, who wrote a journal for the benefit of her descendants, said the sight was "unbearable for flesh and blood to behold." In one wagon were found fifty dead, and blood flowed from the seam of the tentsail down to the lowest.

Daniel Bezuidenhout, afterwards a burgher of the Orange Free State, was in one of the camps, and in his old age wrote down the story:—They were attacked in the night, and Bezuidenhout, awakened by the whirr of the assegais and the barking of the dogs, ran towards the wagons to get his gun. With his hands, in the semi-darkness, he broke through three lines of Kafirs, but found more and more. Then he heard his father cry, "O God!" and he knew from the sound that the old man was choking with blood; he had been struck in the gullet. Another burgher fired three shots and killed three Zulus, and then he too cried "O Lord!" and fell. Bezuidenhout fled. One assegai stabbed him "on the knot of the left shoulder through the breast and along the ribs." A second struck the bone of his left thigh, "so that the point of the blade was bent, as I found afterwards when I drew it out." A third struck him above the left knee, a fourth above the left ankle "through the sinews under the calf." Then he got among the cattle and so escaped. With other refugees he sought shelter in a defended camp, and beat off Dingaan's regiments in a three days' fight.



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And now the burghers braced themselves for revenge. A commando set out under Maritz, Potgieter, and Uys, but the three leaders were jealous of one another; and though some of them fought bravely, others hung back—or so at least one of the narrators says. There was desperate fighting, and part of the force was almost destroyed in a narrow pass. But they fought their way through with desperate valour. Here Piet Uys fell, and when his son, who was riding near, looked back he saw him surrounded by the Zulus. The brave little fellow, for he was only a boy of twelve, turned his horse and charged. In a moment he was surrounded by the savages. He shot two and then fell beside his father.

At this very time the English of Port Natal were determined on avenging the deaths of Halstead and Biggar. They brought together a force of seventeen Englishmen, as many Hottentots, and about fifteen hundred Zulus who had fled from Dingaan's rule. The Englishmen were their chiefs, and they hated Dingaan with a deadly hatred. Mr. Hewitson, a missionary, met part of this army on its way towards the enemy: "On the way," he says in his journal, "I fell in with a strange set of warriors. About four hundred Zulus came bellowing a war-song. It sounded exactly like the noise of angry bulls. No one could mistake its meaning; its tone was that of gloomy revenge. The words in English were: 'The wild beast has driven us from our homes, but we will catch him!' They were headed by a white man, who had an old straw hat on, with an ostrich feather stuck in it. He had on his shoulder an elephant gun covered with a panther's skin, and walked quite at ease at the head of his party, who went on with this dismal song, except that occasionally they all whistled the Zulu charge. They had flags flying, on one of which was written, 'Izin kumbi' (or the locust); on another 'For justice we fight.'

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They did not fatigue themselves with jumping or shouting, but the monotonous howl could be heard for at least two miles. In front they drove the cattle for slaughter; in rear the degraded wives carried Indian corn, pumpkins, etc., all of which passed so quickly by me that it seemed like a frightful dream."

A vivid glimpse—is it not?—of these appalling wars of extermination.

The Durban commando was at first successful, capturing several thousand cattle. But in a subsequent expedition Panda, Dingaan's brother, cunningly drew the little army on until he had lured it over the Tugela and into a deadly trap, and after a most desperate fight in which whole regiments of Zulus were mown down, the whole of the Port Natal army, except four Englishmen and five hundred Zulus, was destroyed, and the victorious Zulu army sweeping into Durban left the place in ruins.

Fortunately there was a brig in the harbour, and the settlers got aboard in time. Young Wood tells how the Zulus called on them from the shore to land, and how the settlers laughed at them from their boat. The refugee Zulus were not so fortunate; but many of the invaders fell before their guns. "When we landed," says Wood, "we found that some of our Zulus had shot numbers of the enemy. Two we found lying dead, dressed in my mother's gowns, with full sleeves, and in stockings without shoes." Imagine it—the two brawny savages lying stiff, in their early Victorian gowns (period 1838) with the blood flowing over the bombazine, and their feet sticking out starkly in white cotton stockings! Red Riding Hood's wolf in grandmother's nightcap was nothing to this!

But the Boers were gathering strength for another blow. This time the great Andries Willem Jacobus Pretorius was commandant, and he had an army not far short of five hundred burghers with horses, wagons,

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and small cannon. Pretorius was a fine leader. He kept good watch and fair discipline, and he was a merciful man, as his despatches and edicts show. With psalm and hymn and "sermons about Joshua," the huge cavalcade marched along towards Dingaans kraal, the dreadful Umkungunhlovu.

Bantjes, the commandant's secretary, has given us a graphic account of the expedition. On Sunday, the 16th December 1838—Dingaans Day, as it was ever afterwards called—the camp was formed on the bank of a river, which being still and steep of side gave complete protection on one flank, while a deep little ravine guarded the other. At dawn the Zulu army advanced upon the two open sides of the camp. Bantjes says it was a terrible and yet beautiful sight—thirty-six regiments in close order, nine or ten thousand fighting Zulus, with their plumes and long shields and great spears. Then the firing began with muskets and big guns. The wagons were fastened together with long ladders, and skins of oxen were stretched over the wheels. At the back of each wagon there were little heaps of gunpowder and bullets, and when the Zulu regiments had charged to within ten paces of the camp, the Boers had scarcely time to throw a handful of powder into the gun, and then slip a bullet down the barrel, without a moment even to drive it home with a ramrod. "Of that fight," says Bezuidenhout, "nothing remains in my memory except shouting and tumult and lamentation, and a sea of black faces; and a dense smoke that rose straight as a plumb-line upwards from the ground."

Thus the battle raged for two hours, and then Pretorius opened the laager and sallied out with his men on horseback, leaving only a few men in the camp. It was a daring and magnificently conceived piece of tactics—one of the most brilliant things ever done in native warfare. The Zulus, taken between two fires, wavered and fled. The Boers galloped among them. The

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commandant, at close quarters with one Zulu and finding his horse unmanageable, jumped to the ground to shoot his opponent. His gun missed fire. The Zulu stabbed and stabbed, Pretorius fencing with his musket. Then the two closed; the commandant took a thrust through his left hand and held the Zulu down with his right, until a burgher came up and drawing the spear from Pretorius's hand killed the Kafir with it.

The Zulus were now in full flight. The ravine was chock-full of them, and here the Boers made dreadful havoc. Others fled in the open, and the Boers rode along on either side of a great band of 2000 of them, shooting them as they went and skilfully herding them towards the river. "They lay on the ground," says Karl Celliers, "like a fine crop of pumpkins." Those who remained rushed into the river and lay under water "with their noses out like hippopotamuses." The Boers went along the bank shooting them till the stream looked like a pool of blood, so that it is called the Blood River to this day.

Then Pretorius marched to the king's kraal, which was found deserted and burnt; and the bones of Retief and his men were reverently buried. Dingaan had fled from the wrath of the white man.

It would take too long to follow the action of this tremendous war. The end came when Panda fled from Dingaan with nearly half the Zulu nation. The Boers had the wisdom to take Panda's side. In parallel lines they swept over the country to meet their common enemy. Dingaan, now desperate, chose to fight, endeavouring at the same time to detach the Boers by offering them all that they wanted. Pretorius very rightly shot the ambassadors.<sup>1</sup> Then the two great

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<sup>1</sup> The commandant has been blamed for this by Dr. Theal, following in the footsteps of the French eye-witness, A. Delegorgue (*Voyage dans l'Afrique australe*). But Dingaan by the murder of Retief had forfeited all claim to the rights of war. Tambuza, the chief ambassador, was one of his most notorious creatures (cf. Gardiner's account of this ruffian) while his subordinate Kombazana

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Zulu armies met, and a tremendous conflict ensued. Thousands fell, whole regiments were killed to a man; but at last Dingaan's forces broke and fled, and all that was left of the white man's allies shouted a song of victory over the stricken field.

Dingaan fell into the hands of Sapusa the Swazi, and was there killed. The manner of his death is told by Bezuidenhout, though whether it is true or not I cannot say: "On the first day (according to the statement of the Kafirs), Sapusa pricked Dingaan with sharp assegais, no more than skin-deep, from the sole of his foot to the top of his head. The second day he had him bitten by dogs. On the third day Sapusa said to Dingaan: 'Dingaan, are you still the rain-maker? Are you still the greatest of living men? See the sun is rising: you shall not see him set!' Saying this he took an assegai and bored his eyes out. This was related to me by one of Sapusa's Kafirs who was present. When the sun set Dingaan was dead, for he had neither food nor water for three days. Such was the end of Dingaan."

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was very likely almost as bad. They were treacherous murderers, making a last desperate bid for victory, and richly deserved their fate. That they died bravely need not be said of Dingaan's indunas. If Pretorius had spared them, he would have brought upon himself the suspicion of his allies.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE FAMILY QUARREL

AND now we come to the saddest part of our history--the wars between Boer and Briton. We have seen how, in the old days, Dutch and English fought for the trade of the East, and how at last England won and took possession of the halfway house to India, its frontier fortress, as the Dutch used to call the Cape. It was not only won in battle and confirmed by treaty but it was paid for in money, and so England, with a just title, entered upon that task which had so long baffled the East India Company, the government of the country. We have already seen how governor after governor took up the work of the van der Stels, to give the land peace and prosperity, to give security to the white settler, and at the same time to give justice and protection to the native. And here, just as with the van der Stels, was the great stumbling-block. The best of the settlers, men like Sir Richard Southey, the Cloetes, Sir Andries Stockenstrom, took the side of the Government, that the native should be given justice and that slavery should be abolished, but the Frontier Boer, who for generations had looked upon the black man as his enemy or his slave, and upon the native's cattle as his legitimate booty, took mortal offence at the attitude of Government; and rather than submit to it, trekked beyond the frontier.

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No one, who has read the old records, will say that the one was altogether right and the other altogether wrong. In some cases, as with regard to the Kafir tribes on the eastern frontier, the home Government forced the local Government into an attitude of hostility towards the settler, at the very time that the settler, bleeding with assegai wounds, was watching his homestead blazing to the sky. When the Boers trekked, Lord Glenelg showed no sympathy with their grievances nor consideration for their safety. He did not content himself with sending a Commissioner after them to liberate their slaves, or warning them not to attack the tribes with which Government was at peace. He took the side of the Zulus, whom he regarded as innocent and oppressed people, and while he refused to protect the farmers he prevented them from getting ammunition through Port Natal.

The balance of right was on the Government side, and that is as much as ever can be said in a human quarrel. For the Boers destroyed and enslaved, murdered and robbed the natives, whether they were peaceful or hostile, as we shall soon see. But we must not forget that we are here face to face with one of the old elemental wars: the black and the white were fighting for Africa; any truce in such a quarrel was difficult. It was like the war between the Spaniard and the Mexican, the American pioneer and the Red Indian. In all cases the white man has been condemned by those who sit peacefully on the land their forefathers won in the same way a thousand years or more ago.

But blundering often, and unreasonable often, still, on the whole, the English Governors were right, just as William Adriaan van der Stel was right. The Boers, who refused to work, were exterminating labour without mercy. Not only did they break the power of the warlike tribes but they destroyed the peaceful and

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inoffensive peoples like the Bechuanas, and the broken clans of the west. Thus from the lowest point of view, the point of view of mere profit, the Boers were wrong. They were like a poacher who dynamites a fish-pond without any thought of the future; or an elephant-hunter who shoots all the female elephants and never thinks where to-morrow's ivory is to come from. The British ideal has been in the long run a better one. We need labour for mines, and railways, docks, farms, and plantations. Therefore we give the native peace and justice, and a share of the land which is surely big enough for all. But at the same time we must be master of the black people. No good British Governor or British settler has ever preached equality: that has been left to the old ladies at home.

But let us return to the early days of Natal, for it was here that the quarrel burst forth into flame. Lord Glenelg, it need not be said, was an anti-Imperialist, and when the Boers moved beyond the frontier, he refused to extend it. Instead, he cackled in helpless wrath like a hen with ducklings that have taken to the water. The British settlers who were at Port Natal petitioned in vain to be made a British colony. But stories of Boer raids upon native tribes between them and the Eastern Province, tribes who were in peaceful relations with the Colonial Government, at last forced the hand of the Colonial Office, and Lord Stanley gave his reluctant consent to an occupation of Port Natal. It was to be an occupation without responsibility, or with as little responsibility as possible. The immediate cause of the occupation was a raid on a Kafir chief, Neapai, on a pretext that he had stolen some cattle, the slaughter of a large number of natives, and the enslavement of many others.

So in March 1842 Captain Smith and a detachment of the 27th Regiment marched from the eastern frontier into Natal. It was a long way—some four



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hundred miles, the rain came down in torrents, the rivers were flooded, and there were no roads, so that it took six weeks to get to Durban. On the way he was met by Boer deputies who tried in vain to stop him in the name of the republic which they had set up. Smith only replied that they were British subjects on British territory, as indeed they were, and that he would only treat with them if they admitted as much. So the negotiations went on, the Boers getting more and more insolent, until at last they swooped down upon Smith's cattle and rode away with nearly all of them. Thus Smith, who had tried his best to make the farmers listen to reason, was forced to attack them.

And here we have the first of many British disasters. Smith's plan was to attack the Boer camp at Congella, a place three miles along the shore from his own position. It was a night attack, and Smith, with over a hundred men and two guns, marched through the mangrove swamp along the shore, hoping to surprise the farmers. But the soldiers were clad in bright scarlet, it was a brilliant moonlight night, and one of the gun carriages creaked so that it could be heard half a mile away. Moreover, the Boers were on the alert, and made their dispositions accordingly. They stationed their sharpshooters behind the trees, and as the redcoats came blundering along, opened a sudden fire upon them. Every shot took effect. The heavy elephant guns of the Boers carrying much farther than the British muskets, the redcoats, who were besides quite ignorant of the enemy's position, were helpless. The gun teams were shot at, the limbers were upset by the wounded oxen, everything was confusion. Moreover, a boat which carried a howitzer and was meant to co-operate with the troops could not be brought near enough for action. The attack, in short, was a complete failure. Poor Smith got back to camp without his guns, and with a loss of seventeen killed, thirty-one wounded, and three

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missing. Then the Boers made a surprise attack upon the position at the Point, and captured about thirty soldiers and residents, as well as the bulk of the provisions. They had now surrounded the camp, and being more than two to one, they kept it closely beleaguered. They had three cannon captured from the English, from which they opened a heavy cannonade. They threw forward trenches and they kept up a musket fire day and night. But Smith was not easily daunted. He dug deep trenches, killed the horses, dried the flesh in the sun, and put his men on half allowance. In the meantime the Boers had allowed the women-folk to take refuge on board the *Mazeppa*, a ship which was lying in Durban harbour at the time. The conduct of the enemy was indeed a curious mixture of humanity and savagery. They were often kind to the wounded, and yet Delegorgue, the French naturalist, tells us they applied to him for the arsenic and corrosive sublimate with which he prepared his specimens, in order to poison the well from which the soldiers drew their water.

In these dire straits a brave frontiersman, Dick King, who knew the wild country like the palm of his hand, came to the rescue. He offered to take the news of the siege to the colony, a perilous business, for six hundred miles of savage territory lay between the port of Natal and Grahamstown. He was given two horses, and at night he swam them across the bay to the Bluff. Once he was pursued by the Boers; once he was almost shot by Kafirs who took him for a Boer; but with the skill of a hunter he threaded his way from mission station to mission station, from kraal to kraal, the fact that he was an Englishman disarming the natives. It was a greater ride even than Harry Smith's, for King had no guide and no relays of horses, and was in a savage country; but he came safely through, taking only nine days to the journey, and reinforcements were promptly despatched.

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In the meantime Smith and his men were in dire straits. Nearly all the provisions were gone, and the water—though Delegorgue had excused himself from giving the poison—was bad. They lived on six ounces of evil-smelling horseflesh and four ounces of biscuit-dust a day, and the crows which fell to their guns were their only luxury. Their trenches were hampered with wounded. But they held doggedly on, and once they rushed the Boer trenches and bayoneted some of the enemy.

But after a month of this wretched life, when the brave little garrison was almost at extremities, a signal of salvation appeared in the sky. "A rocket," says Delegorgue, "loaded with sparks of hope, rose straight up—immense, majestic—at the same time that a powerful discharge of cannon resounded." Two English ships had arrived, the frigate *Southampton*, and a coaster called the *Conch*, loaded with soldiers. The Boers fled like rabbits. The garrison was saved.

And then began wearisome negotiations. The Boers had retired on their town of Pietermaritzburg, and there reinforcements swarmed in from the other side of the Drakensberg. Cloete, the Governor's Commissioner, a member of one of the best Dutch families of the Cape, did all in his power to bring them to reason and to win their allegiance to the Crown. But the farmers were buoyed up with hopes of foreign intervention. The crowned heads of Europe—even the Emperor of China—had been petitioned. A Dutch supercargo, Smellekamp by name, had been sent as envoy to the King of Holland with despatches in the soles of his boots. Holland, they firmly believed, was one of the strongest powers in Europe and was sure to come to their aid. Any one who expressed a doubt or who favoured the English was bullied and threatened with death.

But the help did not come: the King of Holland

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scornfully repudiated all connection with the rebels; and the only troops to arrive in Natal were British reinforcements. In the long run, therefore, the Volksraad, as the Boer Council was called, submitted with an ill grace, and the people as well as the country were formally taken under the protection of the British Government.

Thus Natal became an English colony. But most of the Boers, who could not stomach English notions as to the rights of natives, trekked again, and did not rest until they had crossed the Drakensberg, and their wagons, after passing through its steep and tortuous defiles, opened out like a fan upon the great plains of the high veld.

But let us now turn for a little to events north of the Orange and south of the Vaal. Here we find for a long time a state of politics of such intricate anarchy that it would be waste of time to try to disentangle them. The British Government had allowed Moshesh, the chief of the Basutos, certain treaty rights, and he had formed a great nation of the broken tribes left by Moselekatse, and established himself in the mountain country round the head waters of the Orange. Then west of him was a Griqua clan, commanded by a half-breed called Adam Kok. The Grikwas were themselves half-breeds, the children of the Dutch farmers and their Hottentot servants, and these people had gradually formed a clan system of their own. West of them again was another half-breed clan under Waterboer. Besides these there were tribes of Bushmen and Bechuanas scattered here and there over the vast regions west and north, and there were several distinct parties of emigrant farmers, some, under men like Oberholster, friendly to the British Government, and others under irreconcilables like Mocke, a mischief-maker who had already given trouble in Natal, hostile to colonial rule. All these tribes and clans and



The Voortrekkers



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sections were more or less inimical the one to the other, and the Colonial Government, sadly hampered by missionary influences, Kafir wars and Colonial Office interference, followed a timid and spasmodic policy, if policy it could be called.

But then came our old friend Harry Smith, now Sir Harry and Governor of the Colony, with a great career as a soldier behind him, and somewhat advanced in years, but with fire and energy unabated. With his arrival all was changed. He told the farmers that he meant to take over the country from the Orange to the Vaal; he tried to reconcile Pretorius, who had fought against Captain Smith and had recently been direly insulted by Sir Harry's predecessor, who had refused to see the fine old Boer warrior when he came to Cape Town to present some grievances. Sir Harry also set Adam Kok in his right place and reconciled Moshesh to the change. All this he did with the zeal and fine dramatic fury peculiar to his nature. He wept over the Boers and threatened to hang Adam Kok and almost embraced Moshesh.

But there was a section of Boers who were determined not to submit to British rule, and when Sir Harry recrossed the Orange the disaffected sent north for Pretorius and marched on Bloemfontein. Major Warden, who had only a small force, was compelled to capitulate and retired to Colesberg. Sir Harry was in Cape Town when he heard the news. That very day he put a reward of £1000 on the head of the rebel commandant and began to collect a force. He was soon over the Orange with a fine little army of some seven hundred men, and marched along the road to Bloemfontein where the Boers were waiting for him with a force of about the same strength.

Boomplatz is one of the most interesting engagements ever fought in South Africa. It is typical of Boer ideas of tactics, and it also shows the right way

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of defeating them. If General Buller had studied the battle of Boomplatz, he need never have been beaten at the Tugela. The Boers, as usual, chose a magnificent position. On the right hand the road was lined by a range of steep and rocky kopjes, which also crossed the road in front and met another range parallel to the road on the left. Thus a force which entered this *cul de sac* was open to attack from equally strong positions on three sides. Beyond the range in front was a river, behind that again another range with a narrow pass through which the road wound. Then there was another stream, and beyond still another range of kopjes through which the road passed by a narrow nek. Thus the Boers were perfectly placed for attack and retreat, and they had still further strengthened their position by breastworks of boulders along their first line of defence.

Fortunately, the British were on the look-out, and the movements of a herd of springbok betrayed the Boer position. Smith sent out skirmishers with the strictest orders not to fire unless they were fired upon, for he was slow to believe that the farmers would attack one who had always been their friend and was labouring to benefit them. A shower of bullets, wounding him on the shin and laying three of his men dead on the ground, undeceived him; and under a hot fire he acted with the grasp and promptitude which distinguishes a born soldier. The wagons in the rear were formed into laager, the two companies of the 91st Regiment were put in charge of the two field-guns which were used to open a path through the Boer centre. This central position the two companies of the 45th attacked while at the same time the two companies of the Rifle Brigade advanced in a line of skirmishers upon the Boer left, and the remainder of the little army, two troops of the Cape Mounted Rifles, were used to meet the Boer right, which made a dash over a little open



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plain to capture the wagons and strike at the British rear. Thus Smith had launched the whole of his force except the reserve which guarded the guns in a simultaneous attack upon the whole of the Boer position, and the enemy was unable to concentrate to meet any one of the attacks as they did on the Tugela. The result was that after a very sharp skirmish the farmers were driven in headlong rout from one position to another and scattered to the four winds. If only Smith had possessed a few more cavalry he would have given them the punishing they deserved. As it was, he thoroughly defeated them and inflicted a loss which may be estimated at midway between nine and forty-nine.<sup>1</sup> The British lost eight men killed and thirty-nine wounded, and they had eight officers wounded, one of them, poor Captain Murray, mortally.

After the battle two of the rebels who had fought were captured. One was a deserter from the 45th, another a Boer named Dreyer. Both were tried by court-martial and shot at Bloemfontein. It is characteristic that the Boers, who were British-born subjects, and without provocation had endeavoured to surprise and destroy Smith and his little army, should regard the shooting of Dreyer as a grievance. As a matter of fact the British have always shown themselves extraordinarily lenient on such occasions. But all the Boers were not rebels. Some of them had entered the field on the British side and successfully defended their laager against Pretorius. Sir Harry was received with acclamation, and after imposing a lenient punishment on the rebels returned into the colony with flying colours.

But troubles were coming upon the brave Governor thick and fast. The great Kafir war of 1851, to which I have already referred, burst over the colony. The Hottentot auxiliaries, whose loyalty had been under-

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<sup>1</sup> Smith states "on strict inquiry" that forty-nine bodies were seen on the field; the Boers who always falsified such things, put the number of killed at nine

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mined by intrigue, joined the blacks. The majority of the Boers refused to go out on commando. Earl Grey had persuaded the Governor to send home a large part of his troops, and for a long time Sir Harry, after garrisoning his outposts, had only some eight hundred men available to meet tens of thousands of athletic savages in a wild and trackless country twice the size of Great Britain and Ireland. With the most wonderful skill and energy he met the position. He was here, there, and everywhere. The war began at the end of 1850, and by August 1851 the 73rd Regiment had marched 2838 miles. It was, taken as a whole, one of the most extraordinary defences ever made. Yet Earl Grey, the Colonial Minister, a civilian half his age, in an insulting despatch found Sir Harry wanting in energy and judgment and recalled him, just as the Kafirs were on the point of being utterly defeated. It was some consolation to Smith that his Commander-in-chief, the Great Duke of Wellington, against whose opinion Smith had been recalled, said in the most emphatic and public way, that he "entirely approved of all his operations."

Thus Smith, like Baird and d'Urban, was rewarded by a grateful Government. But the mischief did not end here. The sovereignty across the Orange was revoked against the wishes of a large party of Boers, and what was rapidly becoming a prosperous British colony was turned into a hostile republic.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE FAMILY QUARREL—*continued*

Now let us turn to the course of events north of the Vaal. Here the wildest and most bitter of the emigrant farmers had settled, and they were joined by criminals of all nations who found in the Transvaal an Alsatia where they were secure from pursuit by the minions of the law. The farmers spread themselves in all directions, thinning out over the vast plains and mountain valleys until they had covered an area as large as France, with a population of only a few thousand. Behind them the Boers left Natal, Zululand and Swaziland; on the east was Portuguese Africa; on the north the Limpopo bounded their horizon; on the west the Bechuana tribes lay between them and the Kalihari. They had thus a country rich in nearly everything that man could desire. Its western portion was a high plateau, six thousand feet above sea-level in parts, with a glorious climate, cool and dry, and magnificent grazing for their cattle and sheep. Gold and coal were underfoot in abundance; and the English digger was gradually penetrating the mountains on the east. The plateau fell in great terraces westward to the bushveld, much lower and therefore much hotter, and thickly populated by native tribes who preferred the low country to the cold climate of the plateau. These natives of the west were a very different people from the

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Zulus. Unwarlike in their habits, they cultivated their mealies and grazed their cattle with the occasional excitement of a tribal raid. Numerous as they were they were not a formidable enemy to the Boer invaders who took their pasture, their cattle, and their children, much in the same manner as the tribes of Israel used the Canaanites.

We have seen how after Sir Harry Smith left the Cape, the British Government abandoned the loyal farmers and the natives north of the Orange to their fate. It was a policy of scuttle, and in the same way British sovereignty over the Transvaal was formally renounced two years after by the Sand River Convention, which gave the country up to the Boers on the almost sole condition that there was to be no slavery.

But this condition the Boers had no intention of keeping. On the contrary, they legalised a system of thinly disguised slavery of perhaps the worst form ever invented by man, for the apprenticeship system was a direct incitement to fraud and murder. Under this law Boers could keep Kafirs in their service without payment of wages until they were twenty-five years old. These young slaves were called apprentices. They were either bought from the Kafirs or taken in a raid. If they were bought, it only meant that they were raided second-hand, for very few Kafirs would sell their own children. But the common method was to get up a quarrel on any pretext, shoot the men and women and take away the children and cattle. It was seldom that they were either liberated or paid when they came of age for nobody knew their age and they could appeal to no one. They were openly bought and sold: the entries of sale have been copied from the Landdrost's registers.

That this system should exist in the third quarter of the nineteenth century was of course a blot on the scutcheon of Great Britain, and not only missionaries like

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Livingstone,<sup>1</sup> but the English diggers and the British colonists and officials denounced it. But there were other reasons for interference. The Boers were divided among themselves, and one commando was sometimes in actual warfare with another. These divisions, and the extent of country they covered, so weakened their power that even the less warlike of the native tribes began to pluck up heart and attack them. Moreover the Zulus, who had again gathered great strength under Cetewayo, as bloodthirsty a tyrant as Dingaan himself, were eager to wipe out old scores. The most powerful of the Bechuana were also determined to revenge themselves; and the Swazis were almost as hostile.

The direct cause of this native outbreak was the attack on Sekukuni, a Bapedi chief, who occupied a mountain stronghold to the north-east of the Transvaal. The Boers attacked the country with some Swazi allies; but allowed the allies to do the fighting in the same way as they had used Panda to fight Dingaan. There was enormous slaughter; but Sekukuni took up a strong position in the mountains and defeated the Boer commando. This was the most ignominious defeat ever suffered by white men in Africa. Burgers, the President, in vain tried to stop the rout. The burghers turned tail, and fled, and the news went humming round the black circle of the Transvaal that the white man had been defeated by the despised Bapedi.

And now Cetewayo determined to strike. He collected a great army and would have marched upon the disunited and helpless Boers, had not Sir Theophilus Shepstone, the Native Secretary of Natal, a man who was almost worshipped by the natives, used his enormous influence to restrain them. The Boers were in a desperate state. They had been compelled to engage mercenaries to fight Sekukuni; they were almost

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<sup>1</sup> Livingstone's mission station was wrecked by the Boers and all his school children carried into slavery.

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bankrupt; they were refusing to obey their President or to pay their taxes, and they were being driven off their farms by native invaders. The position was not only dangerous to the Boers; it was dangerous to the rest of South Africa, and against its will the British Government was compelled to interfere. The Boers themselves were sick of the position, and when Sir Theophilus Shepstone annexed the country on the 12th of April 1877, not a musket was fired to prevent him. Indeed, a large number of Boers, headed by Paul Kruger, who had been intriguing against the President, welcomed the change.

The British Government, wisely guided by Lord Carnarvon, stepped in in the nick of time. Parliament voted £100,000 to meet the most pressing liabilities of the new colony. Sekukuni, who had become arrogant owing to his success against the Boers, and was raiding friendly natives, was checked and punished by British troops, and when Cetewayo refused to obey Sir Bartle Frere's orders to disband his standing army and atone for the outrages he had committed, he was attacked by Lord Chelmsford.

The Zulu war began with the British disaster at Isandhlwana. This was a hill against the rocky sides of which was placed the headquarters camp, a good enough position if Chelmsford's orders had been obeyed, and the wagons formed in laager after the Boer fashion. But this was not done, and the defence of the camp fell on a force of 1600 men, of whom half were Zulu friendlies. They were unexpectedly attacked by an army of 20,000 Zulus. Many of the warriors were now armed with guns, so that they were even more formidable than in the old days of Chaka and Dingaan, and they bore down on the camp, regiment upon regiment, like the waves of the sea. The English troops, part of the 24th Regiment, made a fine defence, mowing down the Zulus as they came on; but the native

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contingent gave way under the weight of the attack, and thus left the British defence open on its flank and rear. The Zulus swarmed in with their stabbing assegais before the soldiers had time to fix bayonets, and in a moment all was lost. The camp was one seething mass of Zulus and soldiers stabbing and firing. Then the whites broke and fled, with the savages after them over the rough broken country towards the Buffalo River. Here the fugitives were caught in a trap; many were drowned, many assegaid, and only a few got over the torrent, but among them Melville and Coghill with the colours of their regiment. It was a terrible day, not only for the 24th, but for their gallant comrades the colonial troops. Twenty-six imperial and twenty-four colonial officers fell, with 600 non-commissioned officers and men.

At Rorke's Drift, on the Buffalo River, a little force consisting of one company of the 24th under Lieutenant Bromhead and Lieutenant Chard of the Engineers, guarded the ford and the stores and hospital. When they heard of the disaster in front they barricaded the place with walls of mealie bags and biscuit tins, and waited for the attack they knew must come. And they had not long to wait. Four thousand Zulus surrounded the little post and a desperate fight began. The savages broke into the hospital, where they were met with the bayonet, and in doorways and passages black men and white fought hand-to-hand. The place went up in flames, but not before most of the sick had been carried to an inner position, where the soldiers threw back charge after charge all through the night. In the morning the enemy drew off beaten, leaving 370 of their dead round the post.

The stirring events of this great war would occupy a volume. There was the disaster at Intombi Drift, where a convoy was wiped out owing to the carelessness of those in charge. There was the death of the

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Weatherlys, father and son, in the fight with Umbelini. Colonel Weatherly's Horse went into action eighty strong, and of these more than half were killed. The last seen of the old colonel was as he stood facing the enemy, mortally wounded by assegais, but still wielding his sabre, while with his left he held the hand of his son, who preferred death with his father to retreat. In the same grim fight died Piet Uys, the leader of a brave band of Dutch farmers, who served splendidly alongside their British comrades. We have already heard of his family in the old fights with Dingaan. "Splendid, manly, honest, simple and taciturn Piet Uys," as an English officer called him. He died to defend the retreat of his men. "He was last seen with his back to the cliff, standing across the body of his favourite *mooi paard*, with six large Zulus lying dead in a circle round him, his empty revolver in his left hand, and his body pierced by two assegais."<sup>1</sup> There was the death too, of that young and gallant soldier, Prince Louis Napoleon, a miserable disaster of which no Englishman can think without shame, for it was due to carelessness, if nothing worse, on the part of those responsible for his safety.

There were many checks upon Chelmsford's advance, as was little to be wondered at, since he had a foe of 40,000 fighting Zulus in some of the wildest and most rugged country in South Africa. But he broke the Zulu power nevertheless. At Kambula a Zulu army of 20,000 braves was defeated with tremendous slaughter. Colonel Evelyn Wood had made his camp upon a narrow ridge, guarded on its right flank by a precipice, and on its other sides by strong entrenchments and several guns, as well as by outer and inner lines of wagons laagered in the Boer fashion. Here the Zulus attacked with all their usual bravery, regiment upon regiment, seething up to the muzzles of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *The Story of the Zulu Campaign*, by Major Ashe and Captain Edgell.



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the guns. It was one of the fiercest fights in our history, and it ended in the complete defeat of the Zulus, and the loss of 3000 of Cetewayo's bravest warriors. Lastly, or almost lastly, there was the great battle of Ulundi, where Chelmsford struck his most tremendous blow. His army was drawn up in a hollow square, and was attacked by the Zulu impis that guarded the king's kraal. It was Cetewayo's Waterloo. Redvers Buller's horsemen, firing and retreating as the Boers used to do with Moselekatse's warriors, drew the Zulu regiments on. The square opened to let the cavalry enter, then closed again, and received the desperate attacks of the enemy with unbroken lines. At the critical moment, as in the fight of the Blood River, the cavalry issued forth again and fell with lance and sabre upon the broken enemy. The Zulu army was over twenty thousand strong, and it lost about three thousand men before the day ended. At this moment Lord Chelmsford, a fine soldier and brave man, was superseded, an action on the part of the home authorities that might be compared with the recall of Sir Harry Smith. But the war was over. Sir Garnet Wolseley succeeded him; but the work was done, and the king, Cetewayo, deserted by his impis, was dragged from his hiding-place and made prisoner.

It was a great campaign, in which the Zulu power was completely broken at enormous cost of British blood and money. It was a task that had to be done, and one of its chief objects was to protect the Boers of the Transvaal as well as the Boers of Natal; but, except for Uys and his gallant little band, the Dutch held aloof and allowed the British to carry out the task alone.

We have seen then that the Transvaal was made a British colony for very good reasons. The Boers were bankrupt, they had re-established slavery, they were surrounded by a ring of hostile natives, their misrule

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was giving trouble to the whole of South Africa. England stepped in largely at the request of the Boers themselves, re-established the authority of Government, broke the power of the Zulus, the Swazis, and Sekukuni, paid the outstanding debts of the country, and generally put things right. Here you might have thought was a claim for gratitude. But gratitude there was none. The new Government, perhaps, was too full of energy, a trifle unsympathetic. Sir Theophilus Shepstone, whom the Boers liked, had to neglect the Transvaal for the more pressing Zulu question. Then the Government collected taxes, a terrible thing in the eyes of the Boer; and, no doubt, it was a mistake to claim not only the taxes due to the new Government, but the arrears which had not been paid to the old. Native raiding was stopped, and other disagreeable reforms carried out. Moreover, the Government was largely in the hands of military men, who, though they meant well, were naturally despotic, and the promise of representative government was not fulfilled, though, no doubt, it would have been fulfilled in time.

The Boers grumbled. They agitated for their independence. Sir Bartle Frere told them gently but firmly that England could not abandon the country she had undertaken to protect. Sir Garnet Wolseley said that the Transvaal would remain British territory "as long as the sun shone." The statesmen at home said the same. But two things gave the Boers hope. One was that after Sekukuni was defeated and captured by Sir Garnet Wolseley, the troops were withdrawn from the Transvaal, and the other that Mr. Gladstone, who was fighting the Government in the Midlothian election, took up the cause of Boer independence, which, like the Chinese question later on, was a useful brick to throw at the head of a Ministry. He said that if places like the Transvaal "were as valuable as they

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were valueless, he would repudiate them because they were obtained by means dishonourable to the character of the country." Such statements as these delighted the Boers. But when Mr. Gladstone became Prime Minister and Joubert and Kruger reminded him of his words, he only replied that what was done could not be undone, and that the Government had "given a pledge" "to the native population" which could not be set aside; and the new Government telegraphed to Sir Bartle Frere—"Under no circumstances can the Queen's authority in the Transvaal be relinquished." Mr. Gladstone's sentences were long and involved like the coils of a snake, from which the head sometimes seems to peep out on one side and sometimes on the other. But so much was plain: what he had condemned in Opposition he supported in office.

The most disastrous blunder of all, however, was the treatment of Sir Bartle Frere, the greatest governor and one of the best men South Africa had ever seen, or certainly since Simon van der Stel. He was trusted by the Boers, and the curtailment of his power, and then his recall, struck a deadly blow at the Imperial cause for which he stood in South Africa.

So the Boers thought it was time to act for themselves. They called a meeting at Paarde Kraal, near Pretoria, and proclaimed the republic.

It is quite untrue that the whole country was behind this proclamation. A considerable number of the Boers were quite content with the British Government, and had to be bullied into opposition, while there was a considerable British population which was enthusiastically in favour of England. The natives, too, were practically all for the new Government.

At that time, of course, there was no Johannesburg; but Pretoria was a flourishing little town of some five thousand inhabitants, mainly English. Then there was

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Potchefstroom, near the southern frontier, a handsome township, more Dutch than Pretoria; and there were other villages like Lydenburg, Wakkerstroom, Rustenberg and Standerton. These places had their small British garrisons, and their British residents who enrolled themselves as volunteers and joined gallantly in the defence. They were soon besieged by the Boer commandos, little separate points of resistance in a hostile country.

The first big event of the war was the disaster of Bronkerspruit. Part of the 94th regiment had been ordered from Lydenburg to join the garrison at Pretoria. There were five officers and 230 soldiers with a number of women and children and a long train of wagons. Colonel Anstruther, who was in command, did not know that war had broken out; but he had been warned to be on his guard. That he was not on his guard is clear, for there was only one scout out in front. The main body was marching along gaily behind the band, which was playing "Kiss Me, Mother," with no thought of any trouble. A large force of Boers, at the lowest estimate 500, formed an ambush on a hill which commanded the road at a point where it dipped down into a little ravine called Bronker's Spruit. The Boers suddenly appeared and under cover of a flag of truce demanded a surrender. Anstruther refused, and the Boers immediately opened a deadly volley at 200 yards, wounding Anstruther and killing or wounding most of the other officers and a large number of men. The rest of the men spread themselves out and returned the fire; but they were in a hopeless position. After half-an-hour's fighting, the colonel, who was wounded in five places, and saw that his force was being massacred, ordered the "Cease Fire!" and surrendered to Franz Joubert, the commandant. It was high time, for of the little force fifty-seven had been killed and a hundred wounded.

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But greater disasters were to follow. The Boers, by besieging the British garrisons, forced the English commanders to fight them on their own ground just as they did long after in the last Boer war. There were about 1200 troops in Natal, and it was certain that these would march to the relief of the garrisons, so the Boers made their plans to oppose them in the wild passes of the Drakensbergen, the great range of mountains that leaps up from the Natal plains in a wall of rock several thousand feet high. It was through these mountain passes that they had trekked long before when they refused to submit to British government at Pietermaritzburg, and they knew that the troops would wind up the same road as they had followed themselves, by way of Laing's Nek, a narrow pass between high precipices, the chief of which is the mountain tower of Majuba. In these eyries they could watch the redcoats as they painfully scaled the rocks, and block their way in one natural fortress after another.

Sir George Pomeroy Colley, the general in command in Natal, understood as well as any one the desperate nature of the task. But the Bronkerspruit disaster, which left the Pretoria garrison dangerously weak, and the unprovided state of the Potchefstroom garrison, which, he calculated, could only hold out for a month, forced his hand. As he said himself, towards the end of January (1881), "If Potchefstroom could hold out, one might sit and smoke here with advantage, but they cannot last beyond the middle of February." A large part of his little force were mere recruits who could neither shoot nor ride; he knew that a force double his strength would oppose him at Laing's Nek. There were big risks, but as he said himself, "You may class men, soldiers especially, as those who see the difficulty of a thing and why it cannot be done—and those who see the way of overcoming difficulties and doing it; and I have certainly always aimed at belonging to the latter

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class." But in this case the difficulties were too great, even for so brilliant a soldier as Colley. When he got to Laing's Nek, he found the Boers had defended the pass with stone sangars. On the left of the road, looking towards the Transvaal, towered the apparently inaccessible mountain of Majuba; on the right, commanding the road, was a table hill, six hundred feet above the level of the plateau, with rocky ridges extending away to the right. The Boer right rested on Majuba, its centre occupied the plateau hill, and its left stretched away among the broken knolls and ridges.

Colley had to attack this natural fortress, defended by some two thousand Boers, with only a thousand men. For his point of attack he chose a place on his right where the ascent to the Table Hill was over blind ground. The attack very nearly succeeded; indeed, the hill was won by the first troop of mounted men under Brownlow who shot the leading Boer with his revolver. The Boers were running to their horses when a sudden panic seized the supporting troop and they turned tail and fled. The key of the position was thus lost; the infantry attack failed in consequence, and Colley was forced to retire on his fortified camp with heavy loss.

Then came the Ingogo affair. The Boers had cut off communication with Colley's base at Newcastle, and Sir George marched back with a part of his force to escort the post and bring up some wagons. He crossed a little stream called the Ingogo, and on a plateau above his force was surrounded by the Boers, who were able to advance over covered ground. A long grim fight followed, which ended only with the darkness, under cover of which Sir George withdrew his troops and guns and made a masterly retreat to his camp, though he was compelled to leave the wounded where they lay on the field.

These two engagements taught Colley that his men

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were poor shots, and not over steady. It was a desperate position. But Colley was not yet beaten. He decided on a bold movement which had in it a fair promise of success.

We have already seen how the great mountain of Majuba, 6500 feet above the sea, towered over the right of the Boer position. It was a tremendous rock with sides that grew steeper till they ended almost in sheer precipices near the top, and the top itself was a plateau where a whole army could make its camp. If a British force were once lodged on the summit, Colley thought, the Boer position in the pass below would be at its mercy. Like a good general he first made himself master of the geography of the mountain and its surroundings, and he found that it could be scaled on the western side and that water was to be found at the top. Then he made his plans, not on the spur of the moment, but silently and secretly. He knew that the Boers picketed the summit during the day but abandoned the position at night, and it was obviously a case for a night movement. He had received reinforcements—a battalion of the 92nd Gordon Highlanders, fifty of the Naval Brigade with two guns, and a squadron of Hussars. These, with the 800 men left of his original force, gave him enough troops to garrison his strongly entrenched camp, and occupy the mountain without much apparent danger if he could once get there.

On the night of 26th February all seemed quiet in the British camp to the Boers who watched it from their entrenchments on the Nek. The bugle sounded and the lights went out. It was a dark night, but the sky was clear and the stars shone brightly. At 9.30 the little force detailed for the movement silently fell in. It consisted of three companies of the 92nd, two of the 60th, and two of the 58th, with sixty-four of the Naval Brigade, 554 rifles in all. Two of the companies were to be left on a ridge on the way and a third near

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the foot of the mountain, while the remaining four were to occupy the summit. Everything was in order, all Colley's arrangements worked well, and with only one delay, the result of the darkness, the four companies reached the top. It had been a hard climb for the men laden with ammunition and supplies for three days. At first the track was through clumps of thorn-bushes strewn with great boulders that had fallen from the heights above; but the last 200 feet was a rock face, where the men had to dig in hands and toes to pull themselves up.

The crest was gained at four o'clock in the morning, and Colley must have exulted at the strength of his position. He was on a little hollow tableland about twelve hundred yards in circumference, dipping from its rocky rim to a basin in the centre of from ten to forty feet deep, and about 900 yards round. From the outside rim projected at several points a rocky spur, and on the north-western side a little peak, which served as tower and bastions to this natural fortress. Colley garrisoned the kopjes and placed a line of men almost round the rim. The place did not look as if it needed to be fortified, and indeed it might have been held by determined men against a far greater army than the Boers could bring against it; but Colley planned out a series of redoubts to be built of the stones that lay strewn about; and the men were told to secure their positions by fire-shelters of stone and turf. This they did, but carelessly. They were in fact in a state of dangerous exaltation. Their defeats had depressed them; they now saw the tables turned and shouted with glee, and when dawn revealed the Boers far below, showing "scarce as gross as beetles" among their tents and wagons, the Highlanders, standing defiant on the sky-line, shook their fists at them.

Colley did not expect an immediate attack: indeed no attack seemed possible, and the sight of the enemy



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busy inspanning their cattle gave ground for the belief that they meditated flight.

But soon a long range musketry-fire began from the lower slopes of the mountain. It did no harm to the besieged, who lay quite secure behind the edge of their mountain wall. So the morning wore on; Commander Romilly, a gallant sailor, was mortally wounded, and three men received slight wounds; but the garrison seemed secure, and exultingly looked down at the Boer laager breaking up and moving away. But now the enemy was observed coming closer up the steep slopes at the base of the mountain. Their fire grew more accurate, so that moving became risky; but still the soldiers laughed at all thought of danger, for the flanking koppies completely guarded the last hundred feet of the climb—"that smooth ascent bare of trees, rounded like a skull and so steep that only on hands and knees could it be climbed."<sup>1</sup> The reserves were dozing in the central hollow, the outer ring were lying on their stomachs and occasionally potting at a Boer in the valley below, when suddenly a volley rang out at short range, and the garrison of one of the koppies, who had been standing up and firing, were tumbled over like so many rabbits. A force of sixty Boers had crept up the rugged slopes, like hunters stalking mountain buck, and when they had got to within eighty yards of the koppie suddenly delivered this fatal volley.

The effect was tremendous. The soldiers, who had been lulled by false security, were taken completely by surprise. There was an instinctive recoil from the vital point attacked; the Boers rushed upwards, firing rapidly and well; the panic spread and intensified; the men fell back into the central hollow or behind its inner rim, and now on the outer rim was a line of Boers concealed behind the rocks and pouring in a deadly fire upon the crowd below. In vain the officers tried to rally their

<sup>1</sup> See General Butler's *Life of Sir George Colley*.

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men. The panic became a headlong flight; the fleeing soldiers were shot by the score as they rushed in a helpless torrent down the steep sides of the hill. Colley, who had never lost his head for a moment, and had done all a brave man could to rally his men, fell with his face to the enemy, shot through the forehead.

It was a miserable business; but Colley was not to blame. If the men had not been seized by a panic, which he could not have foreseen, the Boer attack must have failed. There have been such panics in the world before, and they will no doubt happen again. Only a few years before the Boers had fled in a manner quite as ignominious from a more ignoble foe, when Burgers begged of them to shoot him rather than disgrace the Republic, as they ran from the despised Bapedi. In the Majuba case perhaps a doctor would look for the cause in the fatigue of the night march, and the strain of watching from the height, as well as the excitement of the men. But the plain man will not find anything to say except that the Boers behaved like heroes, and the majority of the British in a manner entirely unheroic.

Poor Colley! he indeed was a brave man. Perhaps he had some inkling of his untoward fate, for before setting out from camp he wrote his wife a letter of farewell: "I am going out to-night," he wrote, "to try and seize the Majuba Hill, which commands the right of the Boer position, and leave this behind, in case I should not return, to tell you how very dearly I love you, and what a happiness you have been to me. Don't let all life be dark to you if I don't come back to you. It is a strange world of chances; one can only do what seems right to one in matters of morals, and do what seems best in matters of judgment, as a card-player calculates the chances, and the wrong card may turn up and everything turn out to be done for the

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worst instead of for the best. But if one sticks to this steadily I don't think one can go wrong in the long run, and, at any rate, we can do no more."

But after all, Majuba was not the real disgrace of the war. What British troops have lost, they may be always trusted to retrieve. "Let no one ever say that England lost prestige through Sir George Colley," wrote Sir Bartle Frere. "I do not like the word so much as 'character' or 'conduct' which create it. But no country ever lost real prestige through defeat. Nelson, wounded and repulsed at Teneriffe; Grenvil, overpowered and dying on the deck of the *Revenge*, did as much for England's prestige as Marlborough at Blenheim or Wellington at Waterloo. Sir George Colley miscalculated his own and his enemy's strength, but he had nothing to do with disgraceful surrender, and I am sure had rather be where he now rests than sign a disgraceful peace, which is the only thing that can injure England's prestige."

Before we come to the "disgraceful peace," let us see what was happening in the Transvaal all the time that Colley was breaking his nails on the wall of the Drakensbergen.

When the war broke out the military in Pretoria realised that they could not hope to hold the town, which was too straggling to be defended, and the whole population was moved into a more tenable position. The volunteers did well; the regulars, who were foolishly clad in scarlet coats and white helmets, less well, if we are to believe Mr. Nixon's excellent account in his *Story of the Transvaal*; but the best infantry in the world could do little against a mounted enemy, and the important thing is that the place held out, giving at least as good as it got to the end of the war. At Potchefstroom there was a more terrible siege. A small garrison of two hundred men held a badly placed fort against a force of six hundred Boers. In

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the last fortnight of the siege all the garrison had to eat was some rotten, evil-smelling mealies taken from the bags in the earthworks where they had been placed for the purpose of defence at the beginning. But the greatest misery of the siege was surrender, forced upon Colonel Winsloe by starvation after a desperate siege of three months. Standerton made a happier defence, as did Lydenberg; and Rustenberg also, in spite of an ingenious breech-loading gun made by a Boer out of wagon-tires.

It must be said that some of the Boers at times behaved badly, but on this aspect of the war it is perhaps better to say nothing.

Let us draw this last unhappy chapter to an end. Gladstone, who had encouraged the Boers to rebel and then disgusted them into war by breaking what they regarded as a promise,<sup>1</sup> now changed his mind again at the moment when the fortunes of war were blackest for England. Roberts and his reinforcements were withdrawn, the country was given up, and the natives and the loyalists abandoned to the tender mercies of the Boers. The story of this humiliating transaction is well known; its results are too sad to dwell upon. Colonel Lanyon, the brave and loyal Administrator, whose heart was almost broken by the surrender, has described them in letters (quoted on p. 417 of Mr. Martineau's *Life of Frere*) which one cannot read without being overpowered by a desolating sense of shame. Loyalists, English and Dutch, who had stood by the Union Jack through the war, were ruined and had to leave the country in beggary to escape the persecution of the other side. The natives, who had with difficulty been restrained from joining in the attack upon the Boers, were robbed and murdered

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<sup>1</sup> The Boers could not follow such fine distinctions as this, for example: "To repudiate the annexation of a country is one thing; to abandon that annexation is another."

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and enslaved as before; but worse than this, the surrender laid up terrible trouble for all South Africa in the future, for one white race was put in a position to be the tyrants of the other. The Outlanders were treated as the subjects of a conquered race might expect to be treated, and the result was the Jameson Raid and the second Transvaal War.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### CONCLUSION

HERE I must draw my little history to an end, though how much it leaves out no one knows better than its author. Indeed, I feel like Sinbad, leaving the Valley of Diamonds with only a pocketful, for the past of South Africa is thickly strewn with the ungarnered jewels of romance. Of the Basuto wars I have said nothing, of the Kalihari and the terrible treks through the "thirst-veld" nothing, of the great missionaries and explorers nothing, of the shipwrecks on the coast nothing. I have left untouched the wonderful story of the diamond mines and the gold-fields. Of the wars between Boer and Boer, of Kruger and Joubert, Brand and Burgers, and all the other figures of the republics, there is next to nothing; and I have had to pass over such great Governors as Sir George Grey and Sir Bartle Frere with only a reference. I should like to have written of the early days of Kimberley; when Cobb's coaches took roaring loads of diggers along the rock-hewn road over Bain's Kloof, where one may still see the old names cut on the rock, and over the wide Karoo to where the tents clustered round the claims. It would be interesting to go over the old story of the pretensions of the Orange Free State to land which she never

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possessed, and the attempts of the Boers to rule a mining camp which ended so happily with British annexation. It would be interesting also to trace the growth of Johannesburg and the attempts of the Dutch there also to hold new wine in old bottles. This would bring us to the legacy of the great surrender, to the struggles of the Reformers who asked in vain for a share in the government of which they were the main support, and ultimately to the Jameson Raid, to the great work of Lord Milner, and to the last Transvaal War. In leaving such parts of the story alone, it is my excuse that while the remote past with which I have mainly dealt is apt to be forgotten, these later chapters are fresh in the minds of most of us, and have been written, not once, but a hundred times.

Then what thrilling romances are the lives of Cecil Rhodes and Dr. Jameson, and their work, the opening of the Great North Road and the annexation of those huge territories which are now called Rhodesia. Both men have been much abused and ardently defended; but the abuse can hardly come from the student of South African history, who is also a Briton and a lover of his race, nor indeed can it come from the South African colonist himself, Dutch or English, who realises the vast heritage conferred by these men upon generations of South Africans yet unborn. The Great North Road is an open road now, with its long ribbon of railway reaching almost to Tanganyika and the heart of Africa, but it was won in the face of odds so great and against foes so many and strong—the Boers, the Germans, the Matabele—that to open it was an achievement nothing short of heroic. And now we may hope that the other dreams of the great dreamer are coming true. “I believe in a United States of South Africa, but as a portion of the British Empire,” said Rhodes in 1883, and again in 1888 he said: “We must

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endeavour to make those who live with us feel that there is no race distinction between us ; whether Dutch or English, we are combined in one object, and that is the union of the states of South Africa, without abandoning the imperial tie."

The main obstacle to such a union in the past has been the refusal of one race to admit the equal claim of the other. How nearly equal these claims are may be gathered from this little book. The Dutch conquered the Western, the English the Eastern Province of Cape Colony. The Dutch overthrew Moselekatse and Dingaan ; the English Cetewayo and Lobengula ; the Dutch cleared the trans-Orange and the Transvaal, the British settled Rhodesia and developed Natal. The Dutch have raised cattle and ostriches, vines and grain ; the English have built roads and railways, opened harbours and mines. Each race has supplied what the other lacked, and neither can claim to have the first title or boast of being able to walk alone. Nor can South Africans forget what England has done for their benefit in spite of the blunders and the ignorance which have led to so much bitterness. It is not only that Great Britain conquered the Cape and paid six millions for it ; but that she spent vast sums of treasure and many thousand lives in developing the country and conquering the native tribes. She helped the Cape to fight the Kafirs ; she settled the Basuto question and thus protected the Orange Free State ; she defeated Cetewayo and Sekukuni to the benefit of the Transvaal and Natal. With the two races united in South Africa and the benignant power of Britain watching over them, there should surely be a great future. The danger is that separatism and jealousy and reaction may yet triumph over the better feelings. There are still enemies who sow tares in the night, and a rank crop is growing up in such movements as the artificial fostering of the Dutch taal, which tends to keep the country bilingual



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and therefore divided. On this point colonists would do well to remember the admirable advice of their great Chief-Justice Sir Henry de Villiers, who presided at the Convention from which we all hope so much. "Surely," he said—in the *Cape Monthly Magazine* (1876)—"it would be a more genuine patriotism to improve and elevate the mental condition of our countrymen by opening up to them those vast resources, which a study of English literature must reveal. And if any prejudices stood in his way, the true patriot would combat them at the risk of his own popularity in order that his countrymen might not be left behind in the race after culture and mental improvement."

But a book which is concerned only with the romance of South Africa's history should not end in a political dissertation, however tempting the union proposals may be as a text. It should end rather with an appeal to South Africans to study their common history, so rich in great figures and picturesque events. Why not, for example, celebrate the opening of the United Parliament in Cape Town, which has infinitely the best title to be capital of South Africa, by a pageant which would illustrate the wealth of this history? We should have Bartholomew Diaz and the terrible Vasco da Gama, Dom Stephen d'Ataide and Francesco Barreto in their morions and coats of mail. There would be Father Monclaro with his crucifix aloft, and the first martyr, Father Gonçala, in his new surplice. We should see the sturdy Elizabethans, Shilling and Fitzherbert, walking with Jourdain the merchant. Then van Riebeck would come along in knickerbockers and broad-brimmed hat, his lady by his side in ruff and farthingale, and Hendrik Boom the gardener, and Eva the interpretress. There we should see the stately figures of Simon van der Stel and his friend the Lord of Mydrecht, and Willem Adriaan his son.

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Swellingrebel and all the other eighteenth century governors would follow in their footsteps, and then we should have Lady Anne Barnard and her friends of the first conquest, the good General Janssens and Sir David Baird, and the choleric Lord Charles Somerset, Sir Benjamin d'Urban, and Sir Harry Smith and his Spanish lady in her black mantilla. What fine figures might be made out of the old soldiers and sailors of the Dutch East India Company, the sailors led by van der Decken, the Flying Dutchman himself, with his white beard and his seven pairs of breeches. We should have the pirates that defied van der Stel to lay a finger upon them, we should see Anthon Anreith, the sculptor, and Pringle, the poet, and old Predikants in Geneva gowns might walk with the 1820 settlers. Then there would be Chaka and Dingaan and Hintza, and the Boer heroes of the treks, and many other figures that have flitted through these pages! It would be a brave show, winding past the old Castle or under the spreading oaks of the Gardens, and would serve to demonstrate to South Africa what she is apt to forget, that she has a great past as well as a great future.

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